DEVENDRA ISSAR

images of KAMA

IMAGES OF KAMA

IMAGES OF KAMA

DEVENDRA ISSAR

UNIQUE PUBLICATIONS
DELHI

Acknowledgement
Illustrations appearing in this book are reproduced by courtesy of various collectors and museums and are gratefully acknowledged.

FIRST EDITION: 1983

© DEVENDRA ISSAR 1983

राजकीय संग्रहालय, लखनऊ
क्रमसंख्या 5699
प्राप्ति तिथि
विभाग
श्रेणी
STATE MUSEUM, LUCKNOW.

PRICE RS. : 80.00

Published by
UNIQUE PUBLICATIONS
3380, BAQA STREET,
HAUZ QAZI, DELHI-110006 (INDIA)

Printed in India by Shanti Printers, 3428 Gali Bajrang Bali,
Bazar Sita Ram, Delhi-6

Contents

1 KAMA
THE GOD OF LOVE 11

2 SHIVA/SHAKTI
THE COSMIC COITUS 15

3 TANTRA
SALVATION THROUGH SEX 18

4 KRISHNA
THE BHAKTI CULT 23

5 KAMASUTRA
THE ART OF LOVE 27

6 EROTIC ART
THE AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE 33

7 KHAJURAHO
THE ECSTASY IN STONE 39

8 SHRINGARA
THE POETRY OF PASSION 43

9 EROTICISM 49
THE NEW CULT

10 PORNOGRAPHY 56
THE NEW FREEDOM

11 CENSORSHIP 61
TO BE OR NOT TO BE

12 FILMS 69
THE BARE BODY

13 ADVERTISING 74
THE FEMALE FACTOR

14 SKIN MAGAZINES 79
THE VOYEUR'S PARADISE

15 AFTER NUDITY 82
WHAT NEXT!

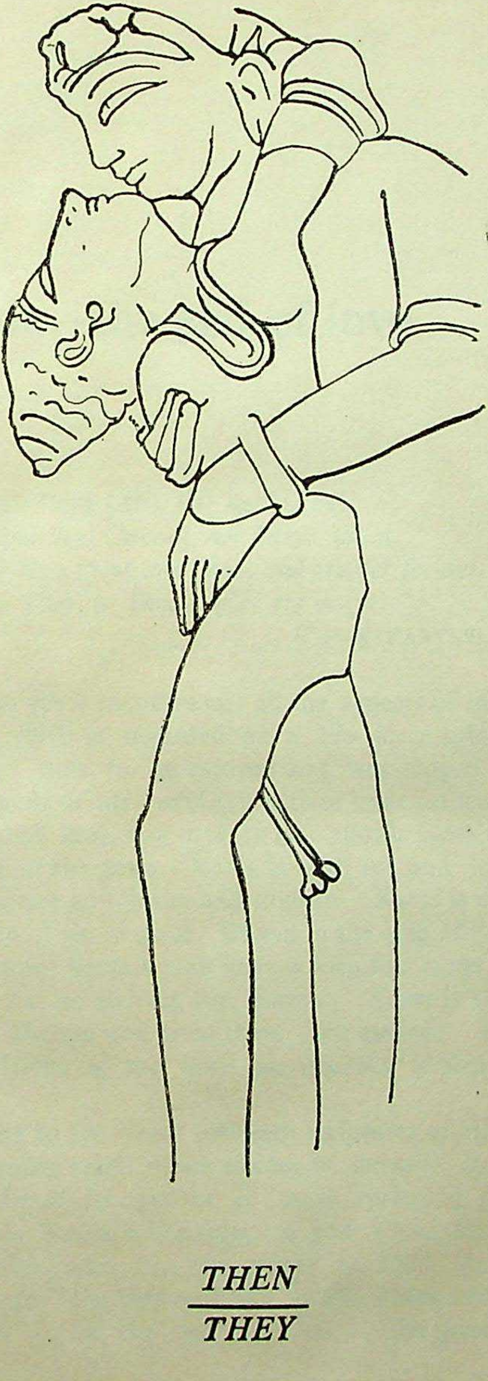
16 DOCUMENTS 87
COMMISSION ON OBSCENITY AND PORNOGRAPHY (USA)
ENQUIRY COMMITTEE ON FILM CENSORSHIP (INDIA)

PLATES PAGES I TO XII FOLLOWING PAGE 46
XIII TO XX FOLLOWING PAGE 83

There are but two currents in the ocean of love, the male and female, all love life and joy lie in the union of these.

—Bhagwat Purana

"In the principle, thereupon, rose desire,
Which of consciousness was the primeval seed,
Then the wise, searching within their hearts, perceived
That in no being lay the bond of being."



THEN

THEY

1

Kama—the god of love

"*Not even Vayu* (*Air*), *not Agni* (*Fire*),
Nor Chandrama (*Moon*), *nor Surya* (*Sun*),
Stronger than these are Thou, and greater forever,
Kama to Thee, to Thee I offer my worship".

THE ATHARVAVEDA IX. 2

THE Indian ethos encompasses all the aspects of life including sex which is regarded as a life force sublime and beautiful and thus to be enjoyed and worshipped. Of the major four goals of life—*artha* (wealth or material well-being), *dharma* (sacred law), and *moksha* (salvation), *kama* (pleasure of sex) is one of the goals. *Kama* is both sex and love, passion and pleasure and desire and divinity. *Kama* is not soiled with the sense of sin or guilt. Bhima in the epic *Mahabharata* says that without *kama* a man has no wish for *artha*, without *kama* a man has no striving for *dharma*. *Kama* is the womb of *artha* and *dharma* and gives them their essence. *Kama* like *artha* and *dharma* is the third *purushartha* (endeavour) of man's life.

According to the *Vedas* (primary scriptures of Hinduism), *kama* is a creative spirit which resides in *purusha* (consciousness) or *prajapati* (progenitor of man) springing from the cosmic waters. Kama is the supreme god whose first emanation is desire and who has the power to fulfil that desire. Later, *kama* was identified with the sexual desire and the god was thought to be the son of Vishnu—the preserver and

Lakshmi—the goddess of wealth and beauty. Kama wears a bow of sugarcane having strings of humming bees and arrows tipped with flowers. He is accompanied by his wife Rati (passion) and friend Vasanta (spring). He is surrounded by *apsaras*—the celetial nymphs. The 'all devouring god whom men call Kama' has preference for innocent girls, married women and the ascetics. The victim of his arrow is stirred with passion and desire for sexual gratification.

Kama in its entirety is both a path and a goal, a being as well as becoming, and an earthly being and the life eternal. *Maithuna* (the sexual union) symbolises this unity. *Aalingana* (embrace) is the eternal united with the transient, and in this union there is joy, *ananda* (bliss) and *mahasukh* (supreme happiness). The *Shivapurana* equates *ananda* with Brahma (the first member of the Hindu Triad or Trinity. The other two being Vishnu and Shiva).

But *kama* is the much maligned desire in human beings especially in Western thought and religion where sex is considered to be something demeaning, base and sinfull. The Western view of sex is based on the concept of the original sin. This is illustrated by the allegory of *the fall of* Adam from the Garden of Eden after tasting the forbidden fruit. The renowned anthropologist Paolo Mantegazza commenting on the Western view of sex writes: "Our Western civilization approaches women like animals in heat with hardly more than an animal comprehension of the anatomy and human refinements. And yet the West has upto very recently considered their ignorant approach superior." Whereas in the Hindu philosophy it has been given a divine status. Kama is a divine force which created the universe.

In the Hindu vision there is no dichotomy between sex and love as represented in the concept of *kama*. Through sex man can enter into the higher forms of consciousness. It is the repression of sex which leads to the complex, guilt and aggression syndrome. Sigmund Freud in *Civilization and its Discontents* has highlighted the inhibiting influence of modern bourgeois civilization. Wilhelm Reich has equated sex energy with the life force represented by Eros. This is precisely the veiw taken by the *Tantriks* who believe in the achievement of salvation through ritualistic sexual union where a woman is not just mere a creature but is a mother goddess. This concept is in sharp contrast to the views of the Western thinkers.

Even in the Indian philosophy there is a section of people who dread sex as a man dreads death and disease. Ascetics thought sex as an hindrance to the achievement of the goal of *moksha* (salvation). For them a woman is a temptress who allures them through her charm, beauty and youth and arouses sexual desire in man and thus makes him deviate from the path of righteousness and of his merger with the supreme spirit. There are a number of stories where *rishis* (ascetics) have been tempted by the *apsaras* to the joys of sex and pleasures of body and allured them away from the path divine. The story of Maneka tempting Rishi Vishvamitra with her youthful charms and voluptuous dance had become a legend. The result of their sexual union was Shakuntala whose *Gandharva vivah* (secret marriage) with King Dushyanta inspired Kalidasa to write *Abhijnana-shakuntalam.*

A *yogi* also shuns sex. He follows various paths to detach himself from the transient and merge with the eternal—with the Self to release *Atma* (soul) from matter and merge with the Cosmic Spirit. According to Patanjali who codified *Yoga*, *Yoga* is restraining the *chitta* (the mind stuff) from taking various *vrittis* (forms). At the time of concentration, the *purush* (the seer) rests in his own unmodified state. There are various schools of *Yoga Gyan* (Knowledge), *Bhakti* (Devotion), *Karma* (Action) and *Raja Yoga* (the Royal Way). A *yogi* through *yoga sadhana* (meditation) attempts to conquer and subjugate sex. But the *Tantriks* do not believe in this type of meditation. They merge with the Spirit through the medium by way of sexual union. They perform *yoga* and sexual rituals in a unified and integrated form. For them *yoga* and sexual energy are inseparable.

Buddha also believed in denial of sex as a way to achieve *nirvana* (salvation). Our suffering is due to our attachment to the material world. Renouncing the world and all its allurements is essential to attain freedom from the cycle of birth and death. Buddha was tempted by the daughters of Mar—the demon, to the path of love and lust. But he denies them their pleasure. When these beautiful maidens with supple bodies, heavenly cheeks and lips, eyes lit with passion, revealing their shapely breasts of rosy colour murmer to young Siddhartha, "I am yours, O Siddhartha, taste my lips and see that youth is sweet". Buddha replies with disdain that birth and death, sickness and age are their's and he seeks the true and eternal wisdom and tranquility. *Dhampada* says: "Whoever in this world renounces lust/whoever abandons the house of life and withdraws from the world/whoever extinguishes the fire of lust/such a man I call a *Brahman* (the Supreme Being).

So goes the story. When Shiva destroyed Kama for his act of arousing desire in Shiva for Uma when he was in deep meditation, the life went out of the world. The world became desolate—without joy, without spring and without beauty. The absence of desire was the end of the whole process of creation. So the gods approached Shiva and requested him to bring Kama to life again. Kama was resurrected and we are here to write his story and worship him in all his joy and mystery. In the words of Bhima in *Mahabharata* the world says in unison:

> "Give yourself to Kama, have your joy with women,
> In beautiful garments and ornaments, and sweet to behold,
> With young damsels abandoned in the intoxication of drink,
> For Kama, the King, for us is the greatest of all."

2

Shiva/Shakti—the cosmic coitus

"You (Shakti) are the body of Shiva with the sun and the moon as your breasts. Your self I take to be the flawless self of Shiva. O blessed Lady, since you reciprocally realize each other as complement and essence, this union exists of you two experiencing supreme bliss with equal fervour".

HINDU mythology often uses sexual symbols for conveying certain cosmological and philosophical concepts. The physical act of coitus is used to convey the union of the dynamic and the static, resolving duality of life into unity of *purush* and *prakriti*—element of consciousness and the unconscious primeval matter. The Shiva/Shakti union represents both the cosmos and process of evolution. Shakti is Devi, the first and the supreme principal of the universe. It is the embodiment of both the spiritual and the temporal, the soul and the body.

Hindu philosophy considers woman as Shakti, dynamic element or energy. Shiva is worshipped as *lingam* (phallus). It stands on the *gouri-patta*, the seat of Gouri resembling the *yoni* (vulva). There is an interesting story about the worship of Shiva as *lingam*. Bhrigu, a sage, was sent by other sages to test the greatness of the three gods of the trinity—Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh (Shiva). When he visited Shiva, he found Shiva in union with Parvati who did not want to be disturbed.

Bhrigu was not welcomed by Shiva. This enraged the sage and he said that henceforth Shiva would be worshipped as *lingam.*

The union of Shiva and Parvati is in fact the union of *yoga* and *kama*. Shiva is the mahayogi. He incarnates the concept of unity in duality. He represents the male element in nature and Parvati represents the female factor. *Ardhnarishvara* (hermaphrodite) represents the oneness of the two. This fused androgynous image is near to the Yin and Yang elements of I Ching philosophy of the Chinese. The duality in the human and the divine ends here and there is unity of the opposites. The supreme God is Shakti (the universal spiritual power and is called the Divine Mother-Devi). For the purpose of creation, she on her own accord divided herself into male and female. Shiva is the male element, the supreme cosmic consciousness. Shakti is the female element, supreme primeval energy. Without Shakti, Shiva is dead body and without Shiva, Shakti is a blind force. This also symbolises that power without goodness is evil and destructive and goodness without power is ineffective.

There are numerous places of Shakti worship but *Shaktas* (the worshippers of Shakti) believe that there are fifty-two places which are associated with the legend of Sati who married Shiva against the will of her parents. It is said that Sati's father did not invite Shiva when he performed the great sacrifice (*the mahayajna*) because he did not approve of his marriage with her daughter. But Sati did attend the ceremony. She was enraged when her father ridiculed Shiva. She burnt herself in the fire of the altar. Shiva hearing of this was so enraged that he destroyed the *yajna*, took Sati on his shoulder and began roaming in utter anguish and madness. The gods were disturbed by his grief. So Vishnu started cutting the limbs of Sati. Wherever a limb from the body of Sati fell that place became a *pith*, a place of worship of Shakti (Sati). There are fifty-two such places of worship. The place where her vulva fell was called Kamakhya.

Thus Shiva and Shakti were the original couples who with their cosmic coitus led the universe towards the first step in the creative process.

"Out of the union between the two," writes Satish Chandra

Chatterjee (*Religion of the Hindus* edited by Kenneth Morgan), "arose everything and the being of the world. The drama of the world is the play of the one on the bosom of the other. It has neither a beginning nor an end. In concrete imagery, it is the eternal dance of Kali, the cosmic energy, on the eternal breast of Shiva, the cosmic consciousness. It is not, as some people thought the drama of blind atom in empty space."

The legend of Shiva embodies the *yogi*, the lover and also the mendicant. He is the king of the dancers—the Nataraja. He dances in ecstasy and also in death and destruction as is manifested in his *Tandavanritya*. He is the *mahalingam* so he is Mahadeva.

The Shiva/Shakti legend shows that sex and asceticism are not mutually exclusive. Hindu philosophy preaches the worship of the invisible through the visible and the spiritual through the physical. This process leads to the expansion of consciousness. The sexual act is a means to the transcendance and to union with something greater than and beyond oneself. Sex is not just physical sexuality but physically acted-out sexuality. *Tantra Shastra* acts on this very principle.

3

Tantra—salvation through sex

"Inserting his organ into the mother's womb,
pressing his sister's breasts,
placing his foot on his guru's head,
he will be born no more."

THIS looks outrageous even to the most sexually liberated person. But *Tantra Shastra* says so. The words are symbols and symbols have their specific meaning which could be understood only by those who are well-versed in the *Tantrik* philosophy. In this passage the 'organ' represents the mind in meditation, the 'mother's womb' 'represents the base centre of the body in *yoga*, the 'sister's breasts' are the heart and the neck centre, and the '*guru's* head' is the brain centre. The essence is that he who practises the mental penetration through the successive centres and reaches the uppermost centre, will not be reborn and he has attained liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

Much stress has been laid on that part of the *Tantric* images which deal with sex more particularly with coitus. This distorts the whole philosophy of *Tantra*. Sex is only a part of the *Tantra*, and that too in a sublime form with cosmic ramifications. *Tantra* relates to *Mahamaya* (the Great Illusion) or *Adi-Shakti* (the Eternal Force). *Tantra* makes sexual union between male and female a part of its philosophy and rituals as a way of worship of the Mother Goddess. It uses female icons. Everything which resembles female genital is a thing of worship—may it be lotus flower, caves, clefts in a tree, hollow in a stone, downward positioned triangle, etc.

According to *Tantra*, the primary drive in human body is sex energy with tremendous potential. This energy lies in *mooladhar*, the base of the spine. The task of the *Sadhak* is to gain control of this energy and through this of the body and the mind. By channelising this energy he establishes union with the cosmic energy. Sexual energy is a vital force for the achievement of *Nirvana* (salvation). Sexual union is not much of an act of physical gratification but an act of merging with the self. It is a path to self-realisation.

Tantra is the quest for *shakti*—female is the *shakti*. Shiva is aroused when it comes close to *Shakti*. Sex partner is *Devi* or Shakti or *mahamaya* who creates the universe. *Siddhas* or the initiates are to be well-versed in *kamakala*—the art and science of sex. *Siddhas* are also to be adept in *yoga* to be healthy and to have control over their bodies and passions so as to have a long and continuous coitus and fulfilling orgasmic release pleasurable to both the partners. They prefer *Padmani* (lotus type) and *Shankini* (conch type) women as their partners in *Tantric* rites. These women have full and rounded breasts, big eyes, shapely legs, long hands, rounded hips and pouting lips.

Tantriks have a number of sects. *Shaivatantriks* do not use woman as their medium for *sadhana* whereas *Shakti Tantriks* worship the Mother Goddess. For them *Shakti* is the energy. They convert woman into *Shakti*, the goddess. In *Chakrapuja* every female participant is a goddess *Shakti* and every man is a Shiva. For the coitus ceremony the women would go to a fixed place and leave their bodices there. Thereafter each man would pick up a bodice from the heap and have intercourse with a woman whose bodice he has picked up. The *Vamatantriks* of the *Shakti Tantra* cult use women as their medium of *sadhana*. Primarily they do *sadhana* with dead bodies and in the graveyard. Graveyard means: a quiet place on the outskirts of the city; the *peeple* tree; the bed of a prostitute; the grass cushion or the wife's bed. A *tantrik* painting shows Kali seated in intercourse with Shiva's corpse —the male principle in corpse form. Some of the *Tantriks* believe that the most powerful reintegration requires intercourse with a woman when she is menstruating. When she is 'red' she is at her passionate peak with ebullient sexual energy. The white male seed is deposited in the responsive vagina as offering of sacred oil in the alter pyre just as red and fiery as the menstruating woman.

Vamatantriks worship the vagina. *Yoni sadhana* is also known as *Bhairavi sadhana*, i.e., in the company of Bhairava who is: *Datta* (as woman gifted by someone); *Vikrita* (purchased at a price); *Bhakta* (by devotion); *Rhuta* (kidnapped); *Akankara* (volunteered) and who can help her male partner to attain spiritual goal and herself can also attain the same. They enter a canopy with their *Bhairavis* in nude in a stimulating atmosphere with sandalwood oil applied on their bodies and incense burning. Thus making the whole ceremony as a worship of divine power. The sexual union is represented by two flowers—*rakta-karabi* symbolising the male and *aparajita* representing the female. Sandalwood represents the male semen and *kumkum* the female flow.

This concept can be summed up thus that the *Tantrik's* view of the ultimate goal is determined by the vision of cosmic sexuality. The seed of being is the male principle of universal creation. The seed though very small is all embracing. It is often known as Shiva. Shiva is represented by erect male organ. Shakti is the female principle. She has many forms and many names. She is the generative power of the world. Sexual union is thus divine worship—a way to achieve enlightenment. *Tantra* is thus a way of merging self with the cosmos.

Panchmakar (5 Ms) have a significant place in the *Tantric sadhana*. These are *mudy* (wine), *mans* (meat), *matsaya* (fish), *mudra* (grain) and *maithun* (coitus). John Woodraffe in his book *Shakti and Shakta* states that the mother of the universe must be worshipped by these five elements or their substitutes. By their use the universe itself is used as the article of worship. The *Mahanirvana Tantra* says that wine which gives joy and dispels the sorrows of man is Fire, flesh which nourishes and increases the strength of mind and body is Air, fish which increases creative power is Water, cereals grown on earth and which are basis of life are Earth and sexual union which is the root of the world and origin of all creation is Ether. They thus signify *Shakti* (power) which produces all fiery elements, all terrestrial and aquatic life, all vegetable life, and the will, knowledge and action of the Supreme. *Prakriti* produces that great bliss which accompanies the process of creation. But the *Panchatatava* should not be taken literally. The meanings change when they refer to *tamasik*, *pushuachara* (animal action), *rajasik*, *virachara* human action and *sativik*, *divyachar* (divine action). Thus wine may mean wine (human ritual), or it may mean coconut water (animal ritual) or it may mean the intoxicating knowledge of the Supreme attained by *yoga* (divine ritual). Thus these five elements have three connotations: real when wine is wine, substitutional when wine is coconut water or some other liquid, and symbolical or divine when it means the joy of *yoga* or enlightenment. Coitus is the union of *Shakti Kundalini* (the serpent power) also known as the 'inner woman' or the World Force in the lowest centre of the body with the Supreme Shiva in *Saharara*, the highest centre in the brain.

Kundalini power is associated with the reproductive energy. The *Shakti* is aroused in the region of the genitals and is directed upwards through a number of *chakras* (cycles). According to Gopi Krishna, "This part (the base of the genitals) of the human body has been designed by Heavan to discharge, besides its normal function of procreation, the still nobler function of evolution in conjunction with a specific centre in the brain and a host of nerves, employed to extract Elixir of life from all parts of the body for transmission to it through a narrow duct in the spinal cord. This upward flow of the nerve energy partly used for reproduction forms the basis of *Kundalini*. . . The activity of the reproductive mechanism can be reversed; and the precious energy, instead of flowing downward and upward can stream inward and upward to provide fuel to the mind and help it attain a transcedent consciousness."

It is with *pranayama* that *Kundalini* can be aroused and with the arousal of *Kundalini* the door to *sushamna* vein is opened up. *Sushamna* vein starts in the spinal column and goes at the top of the head. This is how a *sadhak* attains the spiritual perfection through arousing *Kundalini* which is coiled up in our being like a serpent. Our body is a miniature universe and just as the universe is pervaded by the *Shakti* so she resides in our body and being and when she awakens we gain enlightenment. It may be mentioned, here that in various religions, snake symbolises sex and which ultimately creates the sexual energy. The snake symbolises the cosmic energy coiled around the invisible organ. Thus through the awakening of the *Kundalini* a supernatural nectar flows down to flood the body while the whole man or the woman becomes identified with the source of Self and the world which lies beyond the crown of the head. Thus the union of Shakti and Shiva, says the *Yogin Tantra*, is the best of all unions for those who are *yatis*, that is, who have controlled their passions.

The *Tantriks* do their *sadhana* through ritualistic worship, the *mantras*, *yantras* and *yoga* as means for merging with the Supreme Being. *Mantras* are the words or verses revealed to the seers in meditation.[1] *Yantras* are the metalic plaques with mystic diagrams inscribed on their surface and are used as objects of worship. *Yoga* is a union with God or leading to that union. It is a method of concentration as a means of liberation. *Yoga* deems body supreme. It is the body through which enlightenment is attained. So a *Tantrik* without *yoga* is not perfect.

Tantras are the scriptures of the *Shaktas* who worship Shakti, the inalienable part of Shiva. Shiva was a Mahayogi, the Adi-Tantrik. The *Tantras* are written in the form of discourse between Shiva and Parvati. Thus the sexual union of man and woman in *Tantra* is the union of Shiva and Shakti.

---

[1] A mantra of Tantric Buddhism says: "*Om mani padme Hum*". *Om* is the sound of eternal enlightenment. *Mani padme* is the jewel in the lotus—male within the female organ leading to the state of completeness and energy infusing wisdom. *Hum* is the sound of power forcing the *mantra* into realisation.

4

Krishna—the bhakti cult

> "*As a butterfly in sunshine filled with light in blue air hovers thus I dance. In the golden hall of Brindaban I dance before my Krishna on whose brow gleams* **tilkam.** *Holy Krishna! From my lips I tear concealment and my willing breasts reveal; inflamed I dance into the Light of Krishna*".
>
> —PAUL ALTHANS, *Mystic Lyrics from the Indian Middle Ages*

KRISHNA is a divine lover. Of the two Epics—*Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*—the later depicts Krishna as a child, Krishna as the cowhead and Krishna as the warrier and the statesman. *Gopis* (lovelorn cowmaidens) passionately desire him. Radha (a married lady) is intoxicated with the body image of Krishna. Her longing for Krishna is the apex of devotion and love and when with Krishna she experiences the divine bliss. *Gopis* love Krishna with the same indulgence and abandonment. They know no inhibition and are ever ready to respond to the call of Krishna's flute. Their passion for the Blue God and their desire to be with him are so intense that they cross all the laws of the human society and even the distinction between good and evil and they leave their husbands to be with Krishna. Their desire and devotion for Krishna is highly erotic.

"When one's desire for Krishna reaches a certain point (when it approximates that of the *Gopis*)", writes Krishnadasa

Kaviraja, "the injunctions of the *Shastras* (religious codes) and *Vedas* become irrelevant". *Rasa Lila* (the erotic dance) becomes a festive riotous play of communal love when Krishna dances erotically with the *Gopis* in the moonlight. He creates an illusion that each *Gopi* feels that she alone is dancing with him. Thus the Krishna cult blends passion, beauty and bliss in the concept of *Rasa*.

The *Gita Govinda* by Jayadeva depicts the relationship between Radha and Krishna with such passion and aesthetic delight that it has attained the status of a spiritual treatise for the Hindu devotees. He says: "Krishna enchanted the women by the pleasures he lavished on them. The touch of his limbs, soft and dark as a garland of lotus flower, created amorous joy in them and they kissed him as much as they desired. May those learned spirits who seek delight in Vishnu derive from the Song of Govinda the essence of love."

When Radha chides Krishna for playing with *Gopis*, Krishna pleads: "Angry Radha, don't suspect me, there is no place for a rival, when your voluptuous breasts and hips fill my heart and when I press your heavy bosom I fulfil my desire." The poets of the calibre of Chandidasa and Vidyapati sang the songs of eternal love between Radha and Krishna with passion of a lover and devotion of a worshipper. Mira was intoxicated with the love of Krishna that she left all the pleasures of royal life to be with Krishna in eternity.

Even the concept of nudity attains spiritual meaning in the Krishna cult. An episode mentioned in the *Bhagavata Purana* (chapter 22) is interesting to be quoted in detail to express the true meaning of the Krishna cult. The *Gopis* pray "O kind Goddess, make Krishna our husband." When they go for bathing in the river Yamuna they leave their clothes on the river bank. Krishna gathers their clothes and climbes on a tree and hides himself. When *Gopis* do not find their clothes and look for them, they find Krishna hiding on a tree. They beg of him to return their clothes. But Krishna says to them, "come and take your clothes." The *Gopis* blush and smile but do not come out of water, instead they go deep under the water upto their necks and say, "O darkly handsome one we are your slaves and will do as you want us to do. But you know that our *dharma* forbids us to do so. Please give us our clothes. Krishna replies: "If you are my slaves and will do as I command then come here and take back your clothes." The *Gopis* shivering in cold come out of water covering their private parts with their hands. Krishna says, "You have exposed your naked bodies to the God of water when you have taken a vow to be my wives. To expiate your sin you must fold your hands and place on your heads and take your clothes." *Gopis* obey the command of their Lord and reveal their naked bodies to the full and Krishna gives their clothes back. Krishna asks the maids to go back to their village and they would enjoy their nights with him, for it was for this that they have taken their vow and worshipped him.

Then came the autumn and Krishna played his flute. The *Gopis* left their homes to join Krishna. The Lord asks them: "Why have you come in this terrible night? Your relatives will search for you. Go to your homes and serve your husbands like devoted wives. It is not much by physical nearness to Me as by hearing Me or contemplating of Me or singing of Me that love for Me is developed. The maids reply: "Like soul desiring release we have come to you abandoning everything. Please, do not utter these cruel words to us. We are your devotees. Accept us."

Then they dance in ecstasy. Everyone danced as Krishna were her lover. Each *Gopi* believed that the Lord was dancing with her only. Embracing her and loving her. And they danced for six months—the Great Dance of Krishna—the *Rasa Lila*. And the Lord thus said, "The love that is directed to me can hardly be the desire for sensual enjoyment, for it is burnt in the fire of devotion and knowledge. Burnt seeds sprout not. This vow of yours and the adoration of the mother will be fruitful. You shall play with Me on these autumn nights."

Whatever the interpretation of these episodes may be the fact remains that Hindu philosophy by and large does not look down on the erotic side of human existence. The metaphysical meaning offered is that by asking maids to be totally naked they were induced to shed their worldly covers and thus they had encounter with their Lord in pure innocence. The entire scene is highly erotic and the cowmaids ravished in it. Yet the Cult of Krishna is not erotic but devotional. Erotic expressions are for the reasons of art than for that of sexual. It is this aspect of the Krishna Cult which is being stressed by the various sects of the Krishna Consciousness. Richard Lannoy in *The Speaking Tree* endows psychological meaning to the erotic aspects of the Krishna Cult. He associates Krishna with Eros. Eros denied or repressed is destroyer of all that is human and divine, beautiful and sublime. Krishna's love play with the *Gopis* release their psychic power and destroys the boundaries of castes and strata, of high and low, and creates a harmonious bondage. This is reinforced by love and devotion and transcends all barriers of social taboos.

The Krishna Cult does not promote orgiastic play. In *Bhagvatgita*, when Arjuna asks, "But, what impels a man to commit sin in spite of himself and driven, as it were, by force." Krishna replies, "It is desire. It is wrath which springs from passion. A monster of greed and sin—Know it is our enemy here. As a flame is enveloped by smoke, as a mirror by dust, unborn baby by the womb, so is knowledge enveloped by ignorance. Enveloped is the true knowledge by the insatiable fire of desire which is constant foe of the wise. The senses, the mind and the understanding are said to be its seat. Through these it veils knowledge and deludes the soul." The message is that *Kama* needs the constant company of consciousness.

5

Kamasutra—the art of love

> "*Kama is the enjoyment of appropriate objects by the five senses of hearing, feeling, seeing, tasting and smelling assisted by the mind together with the soul. The ingerdient in this is a peculiar contact between the organ of senses and its object, and the consciousness of pleasure which form that contact is called Kama.*"
>
> —VATSYAYANA

KAMASUTRA written by Vatsyayana in 2nd century B.C. is so far the best treatise on sex and the art of love making. *Kamasutra* (the aphorism of love) deals with the art and science of love, courtship and marriage. It is a valuable manual on how to win your love and have a beautiful and satisfying sensual experience. It encompasses all types of marital courtship and sexual union and also the pre-marital and extramarital relationship. Vatsyayana believes that simply being husband does not give right to a man to lord over is woman. He has to court her to make love. Use of force for intercourse is rape even with one's own wife. Sexual union is not just the satisfaction of the animal drive of the male but is a refined mutual relationship between man and woman. The relation must be pleasurable for the woman also as she is endowed with sexual prowess equal if not more than that of the man.

The recent researches in the West specially of Johnson and Masters have shown that sexuality is equally, if not more, active in females too. That is why the protagonists of Women Liberation have proclaimed that women have found their sexuality. The new permissiveness in the western society is thus a revolt against the dual standard of morality and the inhibiting influence of the repressive and puritan thought of Christian tradition.

Vatsyayana has recognised the true nature of woman and has written: "When a male and female are the same species of beings, and when they engage in the same act with the same end in view, how can their action be of two different kinds. Why are the roles different? Because they are so designed by nature. Their actions are, therefore, different and naturally their feelings are different. The man considers it his role to apply himself to the woman for experiencing his pleasure and the woman thinks it her role to be applied to for experiencing her pleasure. Thus they engage in sexual union. But can the results be different because the respective roles are not the same? No. There is a reason for the difference in their roles. But it is illogical to suppose that the experience of pleasure must be different because the active agent and the recipient have different roles, for they belong to the same species and are dependent upon each other...... Therefore, the pleasure is the same for man and woman both in respect of its nature and its duration. Really, neither party is passive or indirect, they are both equally active."

Kamasutra has seven parts and only one part deals with the details of the sexual union. Other parts deal with the many-facet relationships between man and woman. Part one deals with society and social concepts. Part two gives the details of the sexual union. Part three is about the acquisition of a wife, part four about the wife, part five about the wives of other men, part six about courtesans and part seven about the means of attracting others to yourself.

The chapter on sexual union consists of the following:

1. Kinds of union according to dimensions, force of desire, and time; and on the different kinds of love
2. On the embrace

3. On kissing
4. On pressing or the marking with the nails
5. On biting, and the ways of love to be employed with regard to women of different countries
6. On the various ways of lying down, and the different kinds of congress
7. On the various ways of striking, and on the sounds appropriate to them
8. About the females acting the part of the males
9. On holding the phallus in the mouth
10. How to begin and how to end the congress. Different kinds of congress and the love quarrels.

There are 729 ways of sexual congress on the basis of the combinations and the permutation of the types of men and women, categories of the parts of their bodies, intensity of passion, methods of coitus, etc. There are eight stages of union: embracing, kissing, marking with nails, marking with teeth, coitus, shrieking and crying, woman assuming the role of man and oral sex. Vatsyayana says that every lover must reciprocate the beloved's gesture with equal intensity, kiss by kiss and embrace by embrace.

Kamasutra describes the sex life of an individual who is a *nagrik* (citizen). It depicts the status of sex in a family and society and enumerates the ways of sexual enjoyment, both at physical and psychological level. A citizen is to be a cultured person interested in dance, drama, music, art and literature. He should have charming manners, should be adept in the art of conversation and should know the joys of the art of drinking. This clearly shows that for Vatsyayana sex is not the act of animal force but a union of the cultured ones. Alongwith the full range of sensual joy of sex, *Kamasutra* stresses the dexterity in the sixty-four arts especially for the *ganika* (the city courtesan). Twenty-four of these arts relate to dance, music, poetry, doll-making, conversation, etc. Twenty with gaming and wagering and rest with bedroom and pleasure seeking activities.

Ganika is a public woman who is well-versed in all the 64 arts. Jain literature mentions 72 arts to be mastered by a *ganika*. She is an esteemed woman though a courtesan.

She is honoured by the kings and the elite. Men of tastes and daughters of noblemen and the kings visit her to learn to be cultured. Even a prince or a noble man with a number of wives and mistresses visits a *ganika*. She is beautiful and possesses winsome manners and charming disposition. She is the object of universal regard. A woman who is adept in these 64 arts can win her husband or lover. Even if a woman looses her husband she can earn her living by practising these arts in any place. A man who is well-versed in these arts can gain the confidence of women easily and can win their favour and love.

According to Vatsyayana, the practice of *kama* with high caste women and with women who have been previously enjoyed even though they belong to the same caste is prohibited. However, the practice of *kama* with the women of lower castes and with public women and women twice married is neither adored nor prohibited. So there are three types of women, according to *Kamasutra*, with whom *kama* could be practised: maids, woman twice married and public women. These women are called *nayikas*. The object of union with women is two-fold; pleasure and procreation. Any woman who can be enjoyed without sin either for the purpose of pleasure or procreation is a *nayika*. Vatsyayana also confirms that there can be another *nayika* who is enjoyed neither for pleasure nor for progeny but for a special purpose. This is in conformity with Ganikaputra's view that a woman who enters into sexual union on some special occasion even though she is married to another man is also a *nayika*. But he gives an elaborate list of such occasions to discourage adultery.

According to *Kamasutra*, there are four types of women: *Padmini*, *Chitrini*, *Shankini* and *Hastini*. *Padmini* or a lotus woman is the most beautiful of all the women. Her vagina is like the opening lotus bud. Her clitoris gives the enchanting odour like the newly blossomed lily. She has swan-like gait and has musical and low voice like a *kokila*. Her charms are: bright eyes, fullmoon face, full, hard and high breasts, soft disposition, three folds around the umbilical region, slim and slender. She is bashful, docile, loyal, religious, and charming.

Another type is *Chitrani* (art woman) who is attractive but not religious. She has slender waist, heavy breasts, well-developed hips, beautiful but restless eyes, glossy black hair and relishes to show her youth and beauty. She loves music and poetry and seeks pleasure and enjoys wealth and luxury, well-furnished house and the company of cultured persons. She is loyal and loving.

Shankini (conch woman) is not much beautiful. She has heavy body, small head and under-developed breasts. She is ill-tempered, suspicious, selfish and cunning. She is fond of flowers, clothes and ornaments but is slow in love making.

Hastini (elephant woman) is tall, and stout, and has broad mouth, thick lips, discoloured teeth, and red eyes. She is faithless, jealous, cruel, unrelenting and selfish. She is unattractive to look at—pale complexion, crooked toes, and thick neck which is rather short. She prefers to overpower her mate in love making.

Vatsyayana divides men into three types as the hare man, the bull man and the horse man according to the size of their penis. The women are also of three types according to the depth of their vagina, viz., female deer, a mare, or a female elephant.

So there are three equal unions of men and women corresponding to their size of the penis and the depth of the vagina. Similarly, there are six unequal unions with the corresponding dimensions when they do not match. He quotes a verse which says: "Men and women being of the same nature feel the same kind of pleasure, and therefore, a man should marry such a woman as will love him afterward." Thus Vatsyayana lays stress on the proper and matching union. The days when they are to be enjoyed, their seat of passion, erogenic zones, how they are to be won and how they are to be aroused for sexual union.

Praising the work of Vatsyayana,[1] Sir Richard Burton says:

---

[1] Vatsyayana has drawn his concepts from sources preceding him. Apart from *Kamasutra* other significant works on sex are: *Ratirahasya* (the secrets of sex) by Kukkoka, popularly known as Koka. Hence, his book is known as *Koka Shastra. Panchaskya* (the five arrows) by Jyotirisha; *Smara Pradipa* (the light of love) by Gunakara; *Ratimanjari* (the garland of passion) by Jayadeva; *Rasamanjari* (the garland of desire) by Bhanudatta and *Anunga Ranga* (the stage of love) by *Kulliamull* also being known as *Kamaledhiplava*.

> "The works of men of genious do follow them and remain as a lasting treasure. And though there may be disputes and discussions about the immortality of genious whichever remains as a bright and a guiding star to the struggling humanities of the succeeding ages. This work then, which has stood the test of centuries, has placed Vatsyayana among the immortals, and on this, and on him, no better elegy or eulogy can be written than the following lines:
>
> So long as the lips shall kiss, and eyes shall see,
> So long lives this, and gives life to Thee."

6

Erotic Art—the aesthetic experience

> *"If the nude,' says Professor Alexander, 'is so treated that it raises in the spectator idea or desire appropriate to the material subject, it is false art and bad moral'. . . . .And since these words of a famous philosopher are often quoted, it is necessary to labour the obvious and say that no nude, however abstract, should fail to arouse in the spectator some vestige of erotic feeling, even although it be only the faintest shadow—and if it does not do so, it is bad art and false morals. The desire to grasp and be united with another human body is so fundamental a part of our nature, that our judgement of what is known as 'pure form' is inevitably influenced by it; and one of the difficulties of the nude as a subject for art is that these instincts cannot be hidden. . . . ."*
>
> ——Kenneth Clark—*The Nude*

IN India there is a rich tradition of primitive erotic art of the *adivasis* (the aboriginals) with refined miniatures of the Mughal style and decorative paintings of the South, water colours of the Rajputs and pen-stroke drawings of Bengal. Apart from the acrobatic sexual positions, Indian erotic art has playfulness in their paintings—as a woman balancing a bird in her hand, or a man shooting a tiger or smoking *hookah* (water pipe) during intercourse, or having coitus while riding on an elephant while going for hunting and so on. There is a painting of a woman combing her husband's hair sitting on a plank while having intercourse with her lover through a hole in the plank who is lying below it.

Indian erotica has no inhibition or sense of guilt or sin or taboo. It has innocence and purity. Of course, sometimes erotica is used for arousing the sexual desire in the spectators as is manifested in the lewd paintings in palaces of the kings and their courtiers. *Uttara Naishadha Charita* by Sri Harsh mentions the erotic paintings on the walls of King Nala's palace with an explicit intention to arouse sexual passions. These paintings sequence the initiation of the sex act to its consummation.

The *tantric* art uses sexual rituals as a part of their worship. The Chinese and the Japanese erotic art has been influenced by the *tantric* philosophy to a great extent. The Japanese nude Bentens—seated statues of the goddess Benzaiten are the oldest wooden sculptures of this female deity from the 13th century. These statues present female nudity including the genitals with anatomical details. There is also a tradition of phallic worship. Phallic deities in folklore and folk art were being worshipped. Their erotic art is based on the principle of Yin-Yang—the male-female principle. We know from the official Taiho Code of the year 701 that *Shunga*-illustrated sex manuals were then in existence for the course stipulated that the physicians were to study such illustrated sex. The Japanese Buddhist artists produced a number of feminised gods in attractive and voluptuous manner. The Haniwa clay grave figures show sex organs and sexual intercourse in a prominent manner. The male organ, sometimes in more than its normal size, was depicted as a symbol of fertility, life and power. Female sex organs were also depicted in 'magnificent' manner. Hukusai's 12 colour prints of the 'Models of the Vulva' (*Elontsubi no hanagata*) are superb in their execution. These are treat to the eyes for their beauty of the female form. There is reference to *shunga* in *The Tale of Genji* which tells the story of Prince Niou's paintings for his beloved in the most erotic form as a compensation for his absence from the princess.

The Japanese erotic art also has its "phallic contest"

(*Yobutsukurabe*) pictures which repeat the theme that the most potent male is no match to the sexual prowess of the female. The 'Brushwood-Fence Scroll' tells the story how a princess is seduced. It starts with the picture of the princess sitting on the verandha in the moonlight with her garments lifted in a manner that her private parts are revealed and she indulges in cunnilingus and finally to a variety of sexual positions. Later, this story telling was abandoned and a set of 12 pictures were produced—one each for a month—to depict a position of sexual intercourse. The *ykiyo-e* books supposed to be the guides for tea-houses started depicting the sexual scenes with lurid details for the consumers. Due to censorship, the near erotic art depicting the nude and semi-nude figures called *abuna-e* ("dangerous pictures") flourished from the 1750's through the 1770's. The Japanese erotic art include ceramic Hakata dolls featuring eroticbas-relief and female nudes with revealing genitals under the cover of transparent robes.

The Chinese erotic art date from the Han dynasty (*ca*, 206 B.C.-A.D. 24). By and large the Chinese erotic art consists of painted scrolls and albums and woodblock prints. Ceramics like perfume and snuff bottles, rice bowls and wine cups are decorated with the erotic motifs. Erotic carvings in ivory and other material show couples fully garbed but when these are turned upside down they reveal couples in coitus position. The Chinese erotic art is more romantic than that of the Japanese art and whereas the Japanese art shows concubines in sexual union and male being more aggressive, the Chinese art shows husband and wife in union and men are feminised. Of course, in both the arts there may be one man and more than one woman in sexual union. In the history of the Chinese erotic art, the picture album *Huaying-chin-chan* ("Variegated Positions of the Flowery Bottle") from the end of the Ming period is considered to be the most sublime part of the Chinese colour printing. The Chinese erotic art seems to be more near to the Indian erotic art in one respect atleast that it is sensitive and tender and emphasises the aspects of beauty and charm rather than the unabashed toughness in sexual acts.

Greek ceramics, mostly from the fourth and the fifth riding on an elephant while going for hunting and so on. There is a painting of a woman combing her husband's hair sitting on a plank while having intercourse with her lover through a hole in the plank who is lying below it.

Indian erotica has no inhibition or sense of guilt or sin or taboo. It has innocence and purity. Of course, sometimes erotica is used for arousing the sexual desire in the spectators as is manifested in the lewd paintings in palaces of the kings and their courtiers. *Uttara Naishadha Charita* by Sri Harsh mentions the erotic paintings on the walls of King Nala's palace with an explicit intention to arouse sexual passions. These paintings sequence the initiation of the sex act to its consummation.

The *tantric* art uses sexual rituals as a part of their worship. The Chinese and the Japanese erotic art has been influenced by the *tantric* philosophy to a great extent. The Japanese nude Bentens—seated statues of the goddess Benzaiten are the oldest wooden sculptures of this female deity from the 13th century. These statues present female nudity including the genitals with anatomical details. There is also a tradition of phallic worship. Phallic deities in folklore and folk art were being worshipped. Their erotic art is based on the principle of Yin-Yang—the male-female principle. We know from the official Taiho Code of the year 701 that *Shunga*-illustrated sex manuals were then in existence for the course stipulated that the physicians were to study such illustrated sex. The Japanese Buddhist artists produced a number of feminised gods in attractive and voluptuous manner. The Haniwa clay grave figures show sex organs and sexual intercourse in a prominent manner. The male organ, sometimes in more than its normal size, was depicted as a symbol of fertility, life and power. Female sex organs were also depicted in 'magnificent' manner. Hukusai's 12 colour prints of the 'Models of the Vulva' (*Elontsubi no hanagata*) are superb in their execution. These are treat to the eyes for their beauty of the female form. There is reference to *shunga* in *The Tale of Genji* which tells the story of Prince Niou's paintings for his beloved in the most erotic form as a compensation for his absence from the princess.

The Japanese erotic art also has its "phallic contest"

(*Yobutsukurabe*) pictures which repeat the theme that the most potent male is no match to the sexual prowess of the female. The 'Brushwood-Fence Scroll' tells the story how a princess is seduced. It starts with the picture of the princess sitting on the verandha in the moonlight with her garments lifted in a manner that her private parts are revealed and she indulges in cunnilingus and finally to a variety of sexual positions. Later, this story telling was abandoned and a set of 12 pictures were produced—one each for a month—to depict a position of sexual intercourse. The *ykiyo-e* books supposed to be the guides for tea-houses started depicting the sexual scenes with lurid details for the consumers. Due to censorship, the near erotic art depicting the nude and semi-nude figures called *abuna-e* ("dangerous pictures") flourished from the 1750's through the 1770's. The Japanese erotic art include ceramic Hakata dolls featuring eroticbas-relief and female nudes with revealing genitals under the cover of transparent robes.

The Chinese erotic art date from the Han dynasty (*ca*, 206 B.C.-A.D. 24). By and large the Chinese erotic art consists of painted scrolls and albums and woodblock prints. Ceramics like perfume and snuff bottles, rice bowls and wine cups are decorated with the erotic motifs. Erotic carvings in ivory and other material show couples fully garbed but when these are turned upside down they reveal couples in coitus position. The Chinese erotic art is more romantic than that of the Japanese art and whereas the Japanese art shows concubines in sexual union and male being more aggressive, the Chinese art shows husband and wife in union and men are feminised. Of course, in both the arts there may be one man and more than one woman in sexual union. In the history of the Chinese erotic art, the picture album *Huaying-chin-chan* ("Variegated Positions of the Flowery Bottle") from the end of the Ming period is considered to be the most sublime part of the Chinese colour printing. The Chinese erotic art seems to be more near to the Indian erotic art in one respect atleast that it is sensitive and tender and emphasises the aspects of beauty and charm rather than the unabashed toughness in sexual acts.

Greek ceramics, mostly from the fourth and the fifth century B.C. were the earliest depiction of sexual nature both homosexual and heterosexual with marked phallic character. Phallic amulets were worn around the neck by the Greeks and later by the Roman ladies as mark of good luck. In the houses of affluent people there were paintings of sexual intercourse. With the Renaissance, there was a spurt in the representaion of nudes and the sexual themes. The seduction of Leda by the god Zeus and the consequent intercourse by the god in the form of a swan was a recurrent theme in that period. The placing of the swan between the thighs of Leda and his beak in her mouth was obvious representation of intercourse. W.B. Yeats was so much inspired by this painting by Michelangelo that he wrote: "A sudden blow, the great wings beating still/Above the staggering girl her thighs caressed/ By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill/ He holds her helpless breast upon his breast." Of the impressionist painters in France, Courbet painted a nude with pubic hair fully and explicitly and also painted obvious sexual scenes. Picasso painted a number of nudes and intercourse scenes which he kept in his private collection. One of his nudes was sold for an exorbitant price of four million dollars. Salvador Dali painted a giant octopus having phallus type parts showing one of those phalluses fertilising a nude woman. This was done in his characteristic surrealistic style. Boris Vansier painted nude or semi nude women which he called "Offrandes" or "Offerings". Vansier said that he wanted "to paint exactly those parts of women from which other painters have shied away". His technique known as *collage impregne* is considered to be a significant contribution to the modern erotic art. Erotic art has been used as social criticism as well as in 'Communication' by the French artist Jean Jacques Lebel. The nude is both an experience and an aesthetic expression. It attempts to reach the ideal body and just not to imitate but to have rhythm, harmony and perfection. By and large the artists were enamoured by the female nude. Who can forget the beauty of Dusseldrof's venus and other primitive nude female figures or Ruben's *Andromeda*, Renoir's *Bathers*, and Picasso's *Les Demoiselles d' Avignon.* In a way a nude is a search for the synthesis of the physical beauty, sensuality and spirituality. Though there is a tradition of the male nude yet it has not gained much of critical support. Margaret Walters in her study *The Nude Male* writes: "The male nude is a forgotten subject. For most people the word nude conjures up the image of a naked woman—a pinup in a girlie magazine or a Venus de Milo. Over the last two hundred years or so, most artists interested in human body have been obsessed by the female nude...Yet, for nearly two thousand years the male nude overshadowed the female: the naked gods and atheletes of the ancient world, Christ stripped and suffering on the cross, Michelangelo's sensuous but spiritual nudes. In the two formative periods of western art, early classical Greece and the early Italian Renaissance, the male body was all important..."

Kenneth Clark has remarked in his scholarly study *The Nude* that the Greeks perfected the nude in order that man might feel like a god, and in a sense this is still its function, for although we no longer suppose that God is like a beautiful man, we still feel close to divinity in those flashes of self-identification when, through our own bodies, we seem to be aware of a universal order.

Material with different varieties is being used by the modern artists. It has been remarked: "It is clear that we may in the future expect still other modern techniques including kinetic, optical, electric, pictorial representations of sound, and other effects, to add further refreshing and fascinating dimensions to the inexhaustible and ever new subject matter of the sexual side of the life."

Thus from the subject matter of sex in the form of fertility symbols and fertility magic and the phallus worship of the primitive art to the modern cartoons of "Sexual Communication" the erotic art has made a great headway. The ancient Chimu and Mochica cultures of Peru dating from the third century produced ceramics with sexual motifs like fellatio and copulating animals. Chicama and Mohi valleys of Peru had ceramics representing human genitals, oral-genital sex, exhibitionism, masturbation and every form of sexual intercourse between human beings and animals. The erotic art of Africa consists of large male and female genitals and small sculptures of couples in intercourse. But most of the primitive art had ceremonious and ritual functions.

Apart from Khajuraho, the Hindu and Buddhist *tantric* art used sexual symbols and coitus for philosophical and cosmological purposes. However, there is a difference in the Hindu and Buddhist erotic art. In Hindu art the male is less active whereas the woman is the dynamic partner 'dancing upon the male lover'. According to the Buddhist art the man's true nature manifests when he "soon after embracing his partner inserts his organ into his vulva, drinks from her lips sprinkled with milk, makes her speak cooingly, enjoys rich delight, and makes her thighs quiver." Khajuraho is a living testimony to the active female sex partner. And who can deny the fact that the temple erotic art of India like that of Khajuraho and Konark has no rival anywhere in the world.

7

Khajuraho—the ecstasy in stone

"*Strange, weiried things that no man says*
Things humanity hides away, secretly done,
Catch the eye of the day, smile in the sun
Cruel things that man may not name,
Naked here without fear or shame,
Laugh in the carven stone."

—*The Garden of Kama and other*
Love Lyrics of India—LAWRENCE HOPE

THE representation of the erotic was a common feature and a popular motif of the temple sculputure of India. Ranakpur, Ramgarh and Dilwara in Rajasthan; Modhera in Gujarat; Ajanta, Ellora and the Karle caves in Maharashtra; Aihole, Pattadakel, Srirangam, Kanchipuram, Bellur, Vellore, Belgavi, Koilakuntole, Delmel and Nagarjuna Konda in the South; Konark, Puri and Bhubaneshwar in Orissa and Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh are a few of the important places of the erotic sculpture in India. And that too in the places of worship. The basement of the fourth pavilian in the Puri temple has the representation of sexual union between the *Vaishnavas* and the *Vaishnavis*. At Mathura, the nude female *Yakshis* at the pillars of Bhuteshvari are shown in their transparent covers revealing their private parts. The nudes and the couples are executed with rare finesse and beauty and the poses are erotically expressive yet far far away from any semblance of vulgarity. On the women of Ajanta, W. Gladstone Solomon says:

> "Women as their best decorative asset with brilliant zest and extraordinary knowledge. Woman is the finest achievement of their art and obviously the most admired theme. They use women like flowers, garland of girls surrounded by their Rajas and their Princes, embellish their palaces, dominate their street scenes, crowd the windows of their cities and often painted with sheer joy of painting them and with no perceivable literary or religious intention. As *apsaras*, as radient *parees*, as sirens they lure the sailers to his doom, but chiefly they shine for us as mortals and as mortals these artists depicted them best and most often they painted them at toilette, in repose gossiping, sitting, standing always with wonder akin to awe. They did not pose women they simply copied their poses."

The erotic temple art of India is a part of a very much larger manifestation of the erotic element in the art, life, religion, and philosophy of an entire people during fifteen hundred years or so of their history. It is so innocent and so pure that there is no trace of obscenity. The artists depicted the sexual joy without any sense of guilt, fear or taboo. There is no hint of prurience or inhibition.

They believed that human fulfilment is not in denial, repression or rejection but in acceptance and transcedence. The path is from the visible to the invisible and from the physical to the spiritual and from the temporal to the divine and from the sexual to the cosmic union. Thus it is like the Dionysian mystery they go beyond the mere physical to a spiritual one through sexual union.

"These images are," says Professor Tuchi, "laden with philosophical and liturgical implications. In them are gathered the mystical experience of India, a passion that consumes the world of things and dissolves the personalities in indefinable beginnings and end all creations. These couplings are not erotic insanities, but are intended to recall to the initiate the primeval androgyne, the one who was the untempore when the universe yet did not exist, in the indivisible of two opposed yet complementary principles from whose united labour life springs eternally."

Erotic sculpture of India can be classified into a few broad categories. Lovely and beautiful females, desirable and with oozing youth and sensuality. By and large these women wear simple and scanty apparel covering lower part of their body, occasionally a drape of diaphanous silk or muslin thus revealing their limbs and private parts. They are busy in toilette and cosmetics and seeing their charm in the mirror. In the words of Benjamin Rowland, "We look upon adorable *apsaras* in a celetial chorus, vaunting their voluptuous charm in an infinite variety of attitudes displaying a languid and calculated eroticism, rendered the more provocative by the contrast between the slim bodies and the towering complications of the head-dresses."

Then there are couples in gentle embrace, in blissful company of each other as just being fired by desire for sensual union, passionate and expressive. *Mithun*, the state of being couple is a prominent theme of the Indian erotica. And of course, *maithun*, a natural and spiritual expression of being a couple—a symbol of the union of the *purusha* and *prakriti*, of essence and substance.

There are, however, voluptuous poses of intercourse both possible and impossible for the common mortal beings. Group sex—one man and three women or three women and one man in copulation and sex play. These figures show orgies in *tantric* cult as well as cunnilingus and fellatio. Men and women with animal faces are found indulging in sex acts apart from animals copulating with human beings—men and women and the sexual union among the animals themselves.

How these "rioting, twisted figures of love and lust" have come into being. There is an interesting story behind the grand design of Khajuraho. The historical records show that the Chandels ruled for about 500 years around Khajuraho. They were traditionally associated with the worship of a female deity Maniya Devi. They trace their descent from the lunar deity, through Hemvati, the daughter of Hemraj. Some say that her name was Amravati, daughter of a Varanasi priest. It is said that Hemvati was widowed at early age. She was extremely beautiful. Once when she was sweet sixteen she went to the lotus pond named *Rati Talab* (the passion pond) to take bath in the moonlit night. Her naked body shined brightly. The Moon God was passing by that side. The god was so much bewitched by the sensuousness of Hemwati that he could not resist his desire. So he seduced Hemvati and ravished her. Hemvati was filled with sense of shame and of fear that being a widow if she got a child that would be the end of her. She was very angry with the Moon God and cursed him. But the god consoled her and said that her child would be born on the bank of Karnavati. He would rule over a vast kingdom by conquest. He would rule over Khajjurpura—which was to become Khajuraho later. The son born to Hemvati was named Chandravarman. He wanted to seek revenge from the Moon God. But he was prevailed upon to do something that would expiate her mother's 'sin'. So came into being Khajuraho. Another version is that Khajuraho is the result of Hemvati's will to show to mankind what man would descend to do when he is possessed by the scarlet desire. Whatever the legend may say there is no doubt that the conception of Khajuraho and its execution show that how sex desire transcends from the pure animal sexuality to the divine one passing through the human sexuality. Otherwise how could one explain the presence of both Shiva and Kama in one house—the house of Khajuraho. Vishnu was also worshipped in a sensuous manner. It is said that there were originally 85 temples of which only 22 remain today.

Khajuraho is the most elegantly executed erotic temple in minute details and varied manifestations without any rival anywhere in India, nay, anywhere in the world.

8

Shringara—the poetry of passion

> "*A poet must be thoroughly familiar with the science of erotics to be able to describe the love scenes and sentiments of loving couples in accordance with the principles of Kamasutra.*"
>
> ——VAMAN in *Kavyalankarasutra Vritti*

KAMASUTRA was considered immensely important for the poets and writers alongwith the grammar, logic and lexicography. It is only then that they are enabled to describe the passions and emotions of men and women in love and union. Bharata describes nine *Rasas* (sentiments) which go into making of literature and gives the prime place to *shringara* (erotic) in his *Natyashastra* and mentions *upcharavidhi* (the ways of winning a lover). In this context he makes a mention of *Kamasutra*. Bhoja in his work *Shringaraprakasha* describes *shringara* as based on *Kamasutra*. The classical literature of Sanskrit is indebted to this immortal work for senstive and passionate descriptions of love. *Shringara* basically deals with the beauty of women, their glances, amorous gestures and passionate embraces. Thus no person is perfect without the knowledge of *shringara*. The literature, the arts and the dance, all are deriving their inspiration from this sentiment of love and beauty and charm. In the eighth canto of *Kumara Sambhava* Kalidasa describes the sexual union of Shiva and

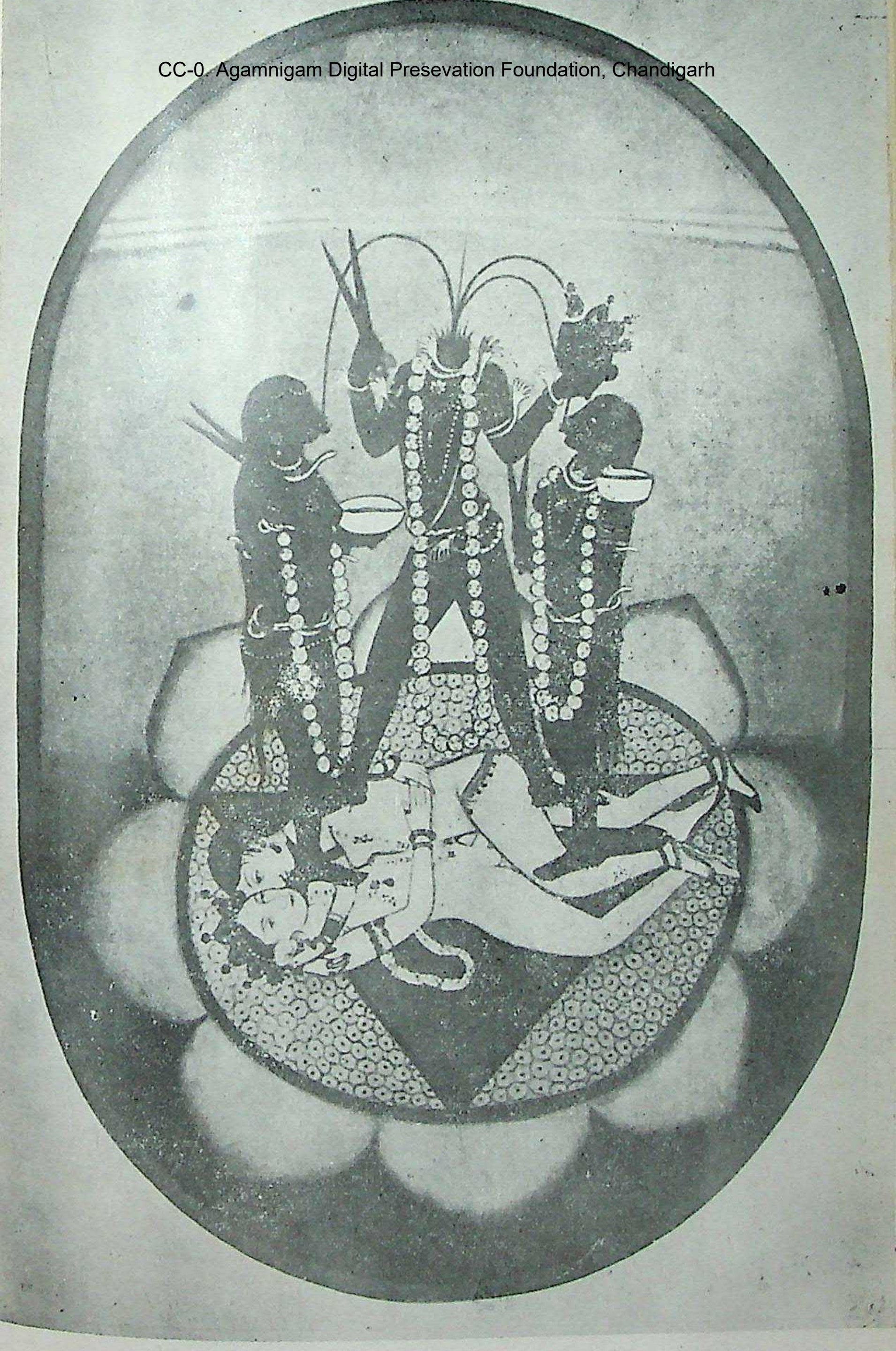
Parvati in a highly erotic manner and tone. Shiva places his hand on the region of her navel. Parvati pushes his hand away and in this action of hers her robe slips off and the girdle is loosened. When she tries to cover the eyes of her lover to avoid his glances, Shiva sees her shining beauty in all nude with his third eye. Shiva was longing to kiss her and bite her lips and titilate her breasts to arouse her passions. They enter into sexual union. As the coitus continued day after day, Parvati started having pleasure in the sex act and she was no more bashful. She allowed Shiva to play with her breasts and bite her lips with erotic zest and untie her girdle. Thus she ultimately submits to her lord's passion with all voluptuousness which she has learned from her lord. Her youth, her beauty and her body was filled with joy unknown to her. They went to the hills of Gandhemadan in the south for their honeymoon. There Shiva made her drunk with wine. She was intoxicated and her inhibitions were gone. The desire for sexual union with Shiva was aflamed in her heart. Her whole body trembled with intensity of passion. And there was that immense and long uninterrupted coitus for 150 seasons. It was an act accompanied by violence of biting and scratching. The girdle was thrown asunder. Her sandal-pasted breasts were rubbed off of her paste. They were so engrossed that they did not want to interrupt but for the coming of morning. In the morning light when Shiva saw the nail scratches, bruises and bites on Parvati's breasts and groins and hair loosened and vermilian '*bindi*' rubbed off, Shiva was again aroused with passion and he did not allow Parvati to cover herself and thus hide 'the marks of passion'. It was a coitus marathon, a never ending night of love yet the fire of passion did not show any weakening of glow and they wanted more and more of each other. It would have never ended but for the appearance of *Agni* (the Fire God) who came there to beg of Shiva to fructify Parvati as the gods desired to have a son from Shiva who would fight the demons and destroy them. Shiva was so infuriated from this interruption that he had orgasm outside her. Parvati was enraged. She cursed Agni that wherever he goes he would be surrounded by black smoke, because he deprived her of having Shiva's orgasm inside her.

This story from Kalidas's work has been told in some detail to show how ancient poets revelled in erotic descriptions of passion and love without any inhibition. There was no sense of guilt or sin or evil in matters of sex. Even the *Vedas* are uninhibited in their sense of pure joy of body. "There is no woman," says *Rigveda* (Book X Hymn 86), "who can give more pleasure than I do. There is no woman who has greater wealth of love's delight for her husband in his embrace. There is no woman other than me who can so lift her thighs when engaged in coitus...That man is alone capable of making love whose penis adorned with hair swells and displays power. Indra is above all in this world."

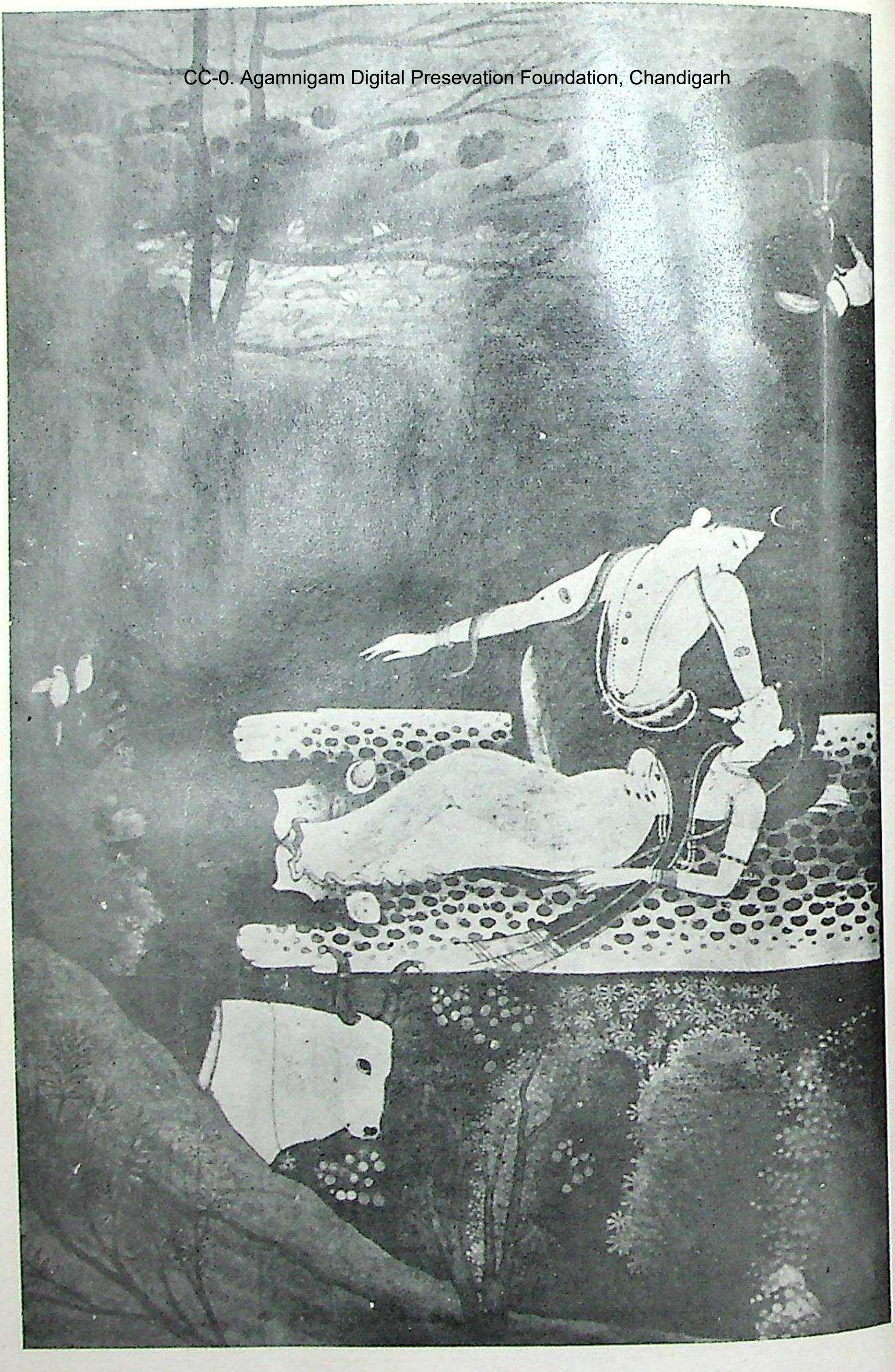
There are tales of love and seduction by gods and of saints. *Apsaras* (the celetial nymphs) were sent by gods to seduce saints so as to render them powerless. The famous story of seduction of Vishvamitra by Maneka when another *apsara* Rambha failed has inspired Kalidasa to write *Abhijnanashakuntalam*. The story of Brahma's incest with his daughter is described to explain the birth of the universe. Brahma has union with her daughter for 100 divine years. According to Matsya and *Shiva puranas* from their union was born Svyambhaiva Manu—the progenitor of man and from him in turn all creation. When Manu questioned her mother about this outrageous act, she replied that this creation was divine and had its origin from this quality of passion. Its organs lie beyond the reach of the senses and its body likewise beyond the ken of the organs of the sense. It consists of divine energy and had its origin in divine knowledge. It cannot be discussed by the mortals who view things with eyes of flesh.

The lusts of Indra have been vividly described without any such sublime motives. He could take any deceptive mask to seduce his victim. His seduction of Ahalya, the wife of the saint Gautama, has not resulted only in turning the lady into a stone by her husband but also having thousand vagina marks on the body of Indira which was described by some as hundred eyes. Whether he was *sayoni* (hundred *yonis*) or *saharaksa* (hundred eyes) the tale reveals the punishment for lecherous acts. So is the tale about Shiva and Vishnu when they went to the jungle of Devadaru to test the virtues of the hermits and their wives. Vishnu transformed himself to a young beautiful damsel and Shiva went as a starked naked man. It happened so that the sons of the saints started chasing the 'woman' Vishnu and the daughters and the wives of the saints were aroused by the naked body of Shiva. When the hermits found this exodus of their sons and the females they chased them. Vishnu slipped away but Shiva was caught. The infuriated hertmits cut off Shiva's *lingam*. The *lingam* fell on the ground but to their amazement it started growing in size upward to the sky and downward to the nether. It pervaded the whole universe. Brahma flew up to the sky to measure its height and Vishnu downward to find its beginning. And they found that it has no beginning nor an end. This tale is symbolic in its meaning that sex is all-pervasive and any attempt to destroy it is fraught with danger for the survival and health of the mankind. Thus sex is human as well as divine. It is to be enjoyed as well as to be worshipped.

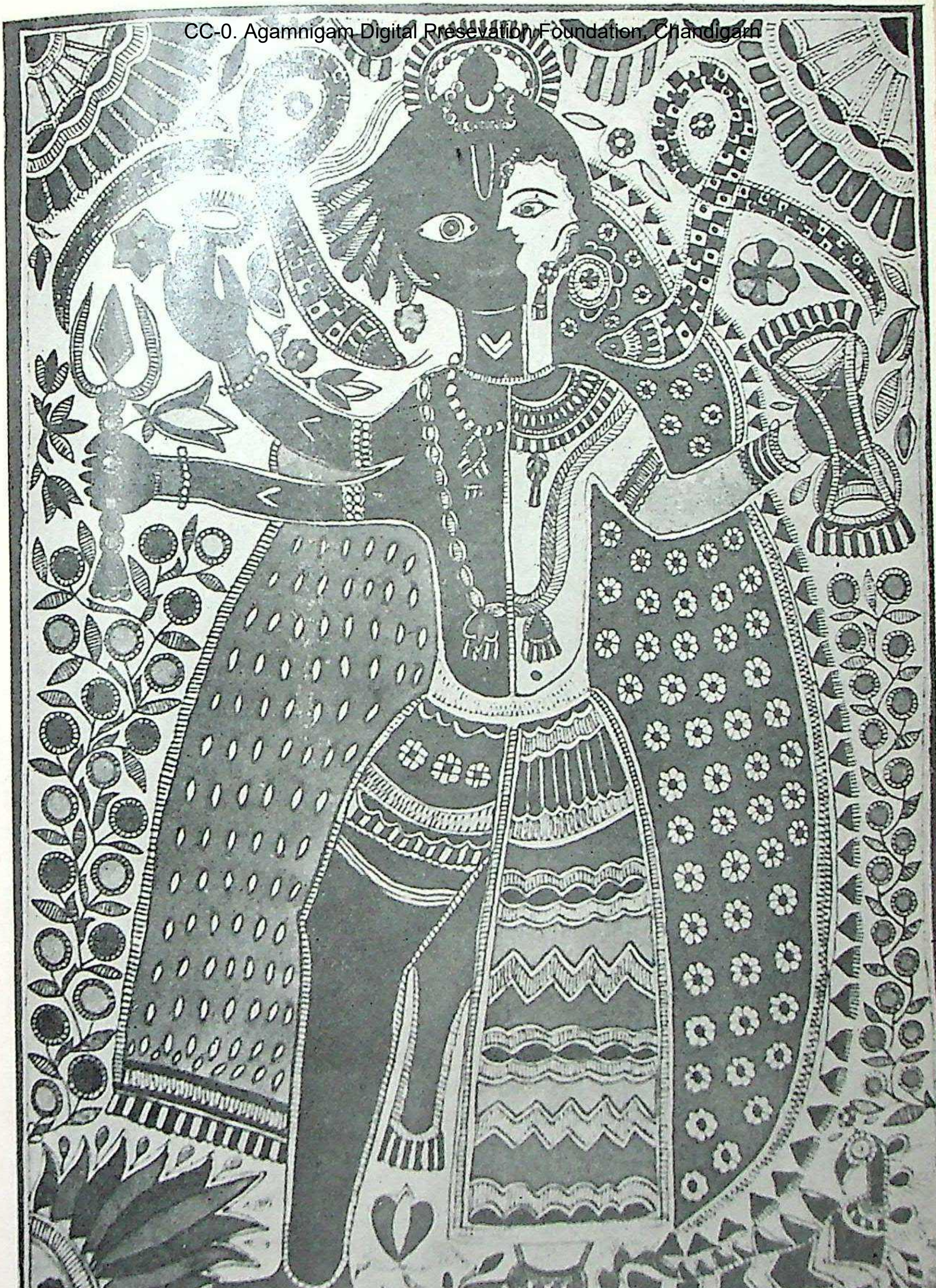
Poetry of passion has been elevated to the deep devotion of the mystics and the *sufis*. The love poems of Jayadeva, Vidyapati, Chandidasa and Mira are the living testimony of the immense power of love. The *Bhakti Marga* (the Devotinal Path) inspired a new kind of worship of Shiva and Krishna. These poets have used sensuous descriptions to show their intensity of devotion.



Goddess Chinnamasta, who symbolises both creative and destructive aspects of the universe, on top of Rati and Kama flanked by two *yoginis*, Kangra School, late 18th century.

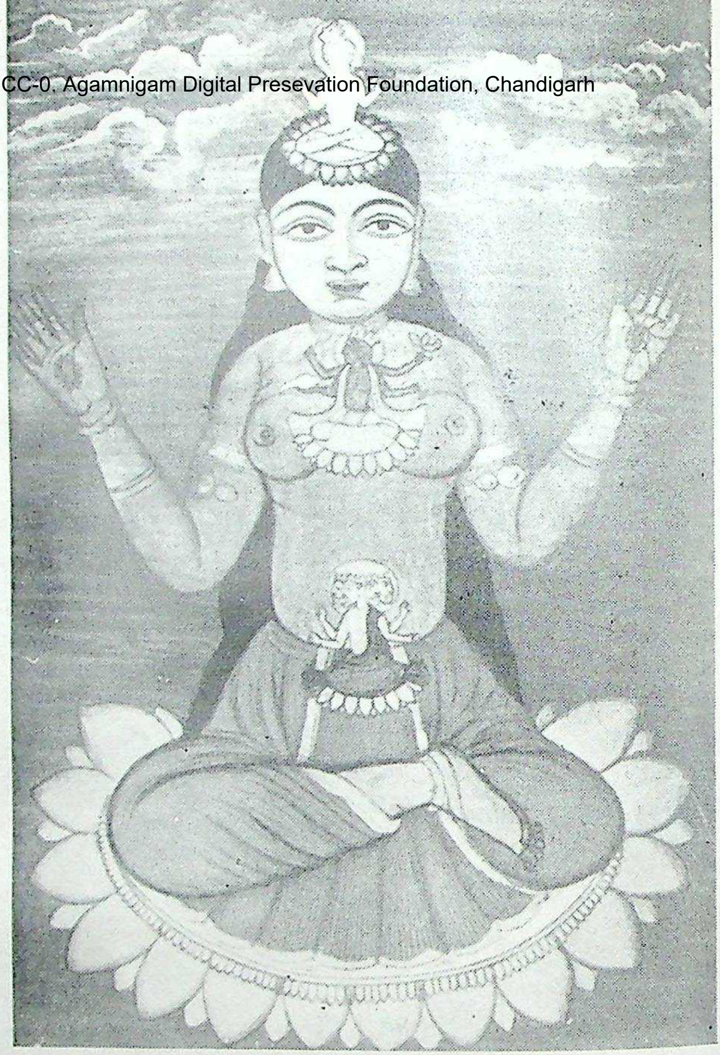


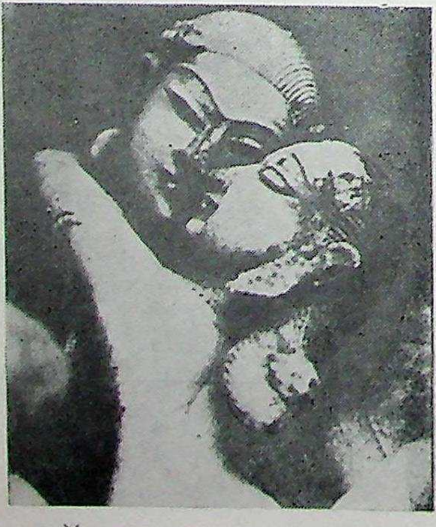
Shiva and Parvati. Rajput painting, Pahari School, 1800 A.D.



Ardhanarishavara—Shiva and Parvati in their androgynous form symbolising the union of god with *Shakti*. SITA DEVI

Devi

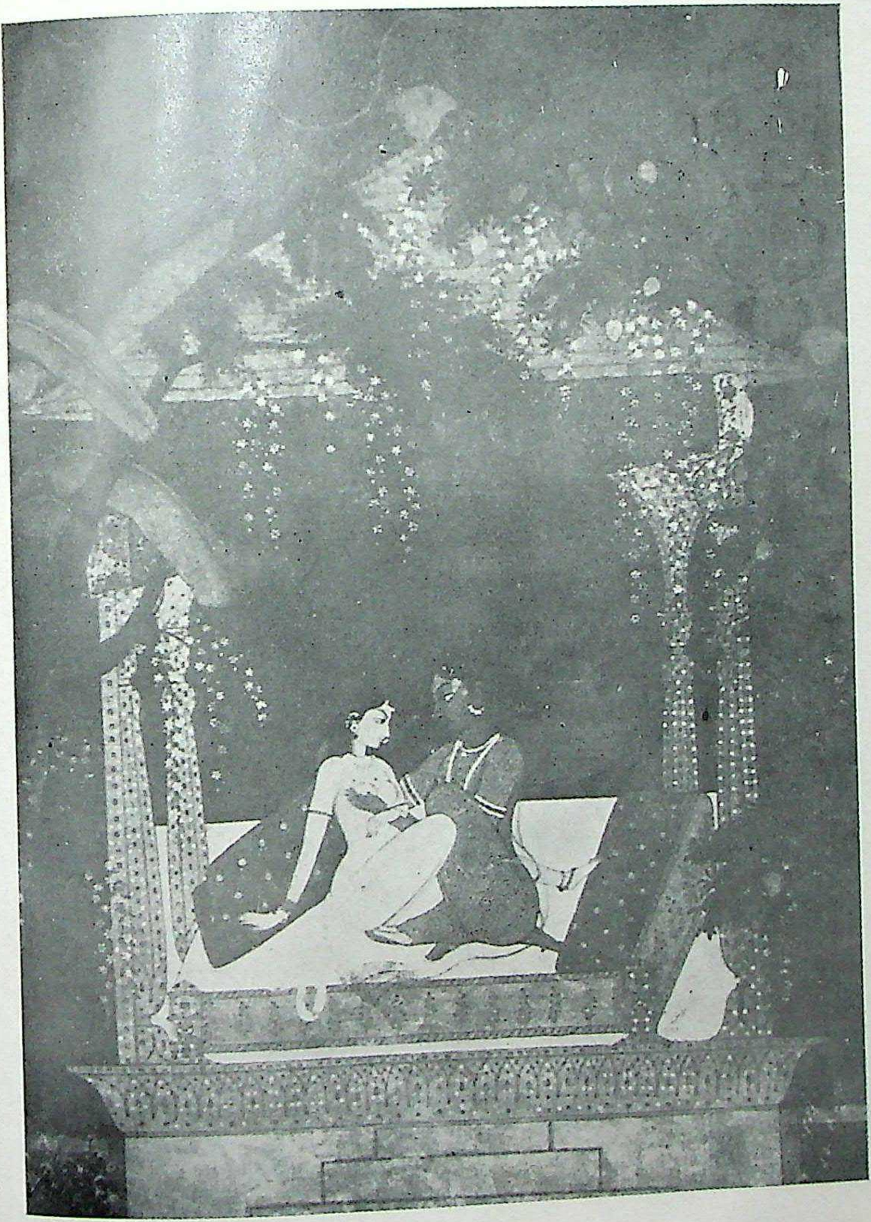


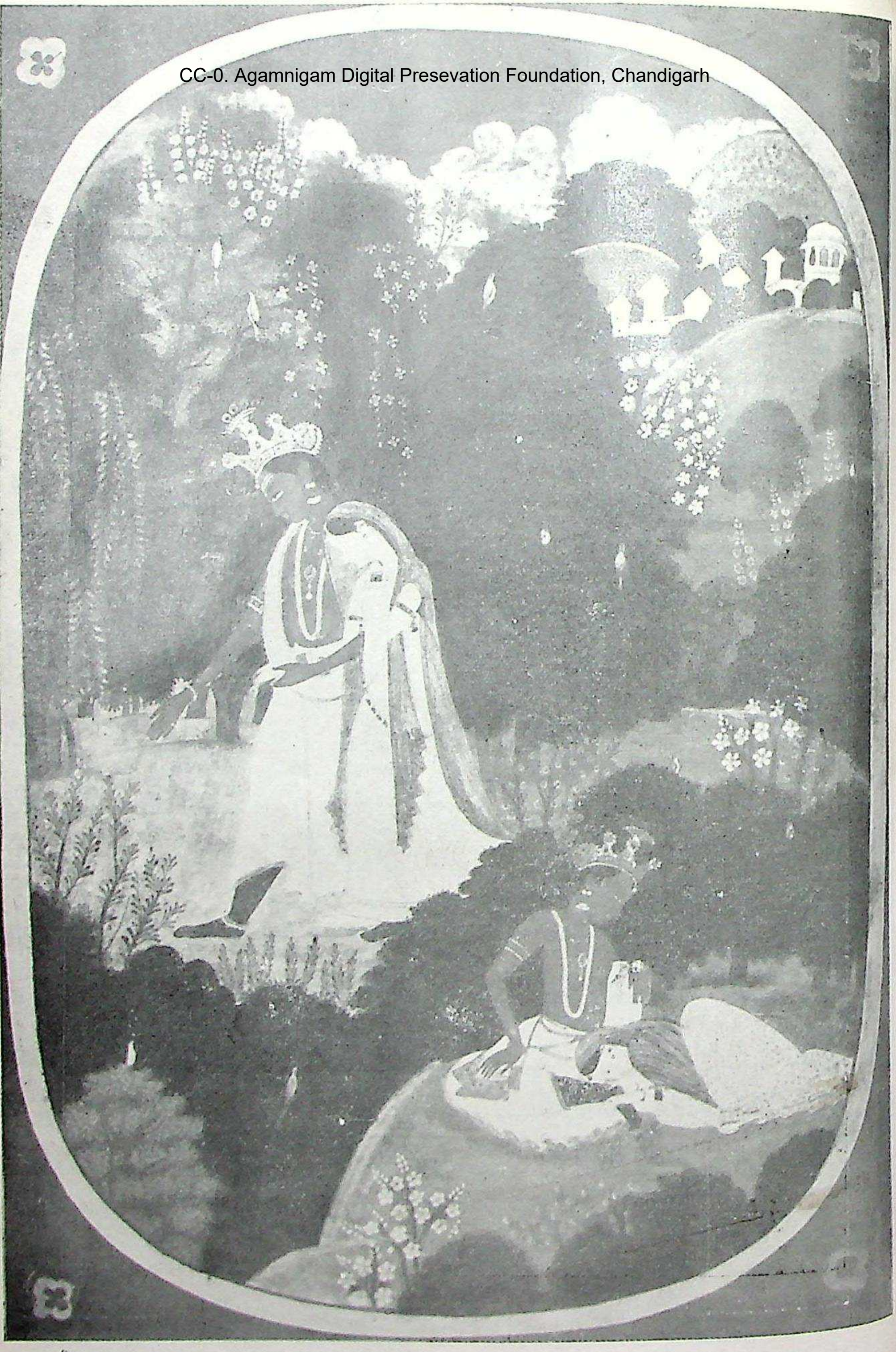


Lata Sadhana, a tantric sexo-yogic asana,

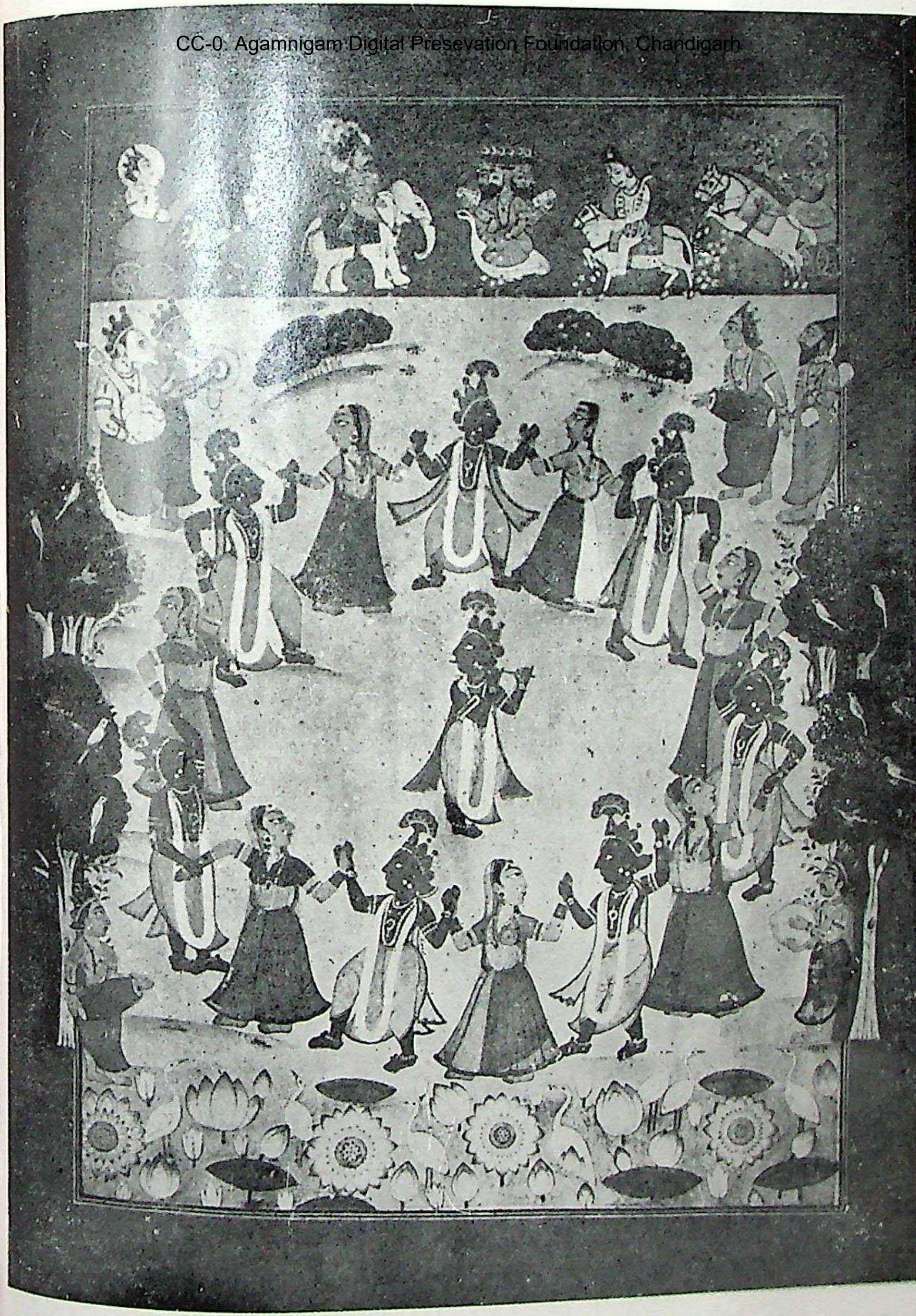
Khajuraho, 12th century.

Radha and Krishna in an amorous pose, Kangra School, late 18th century.

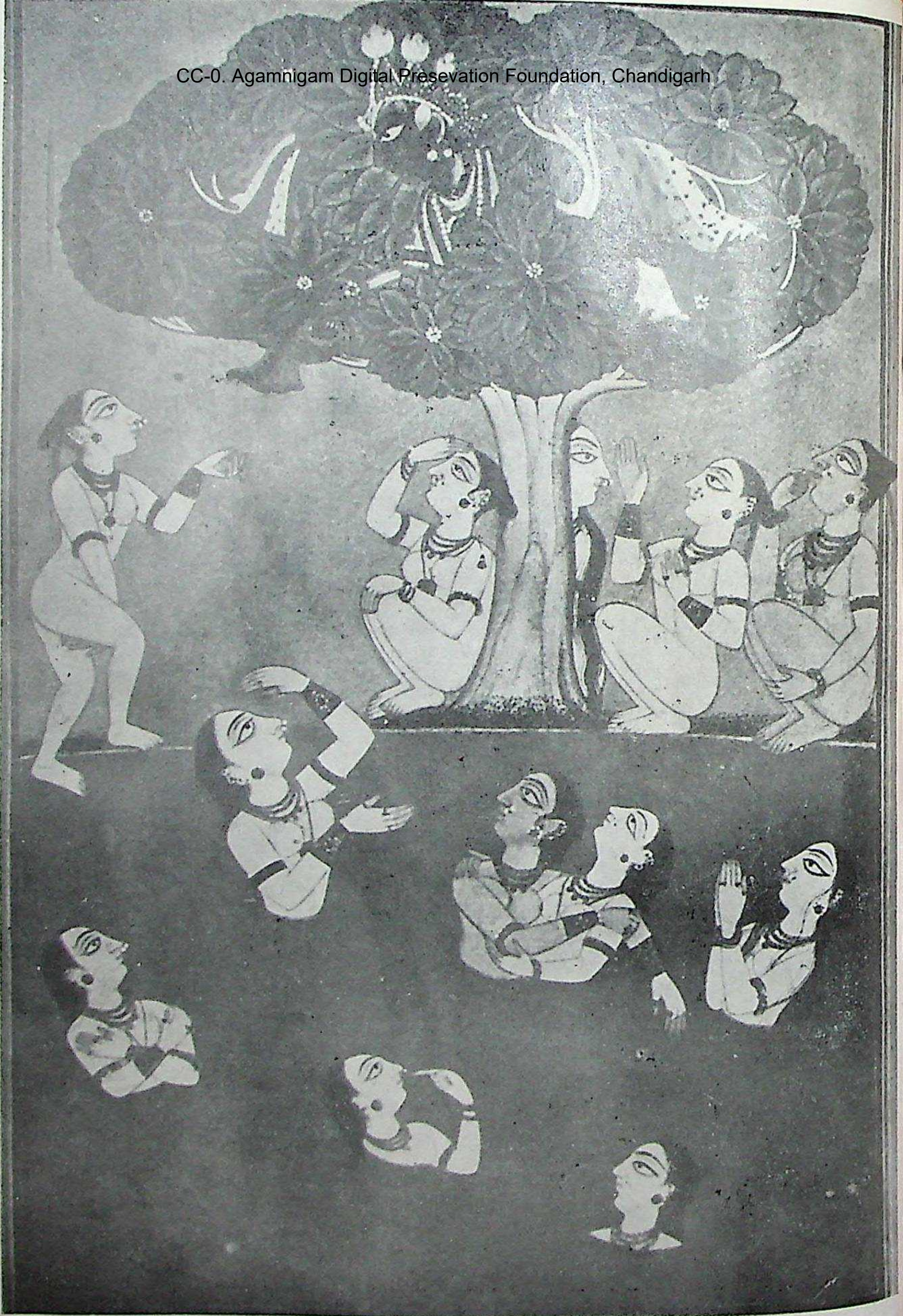




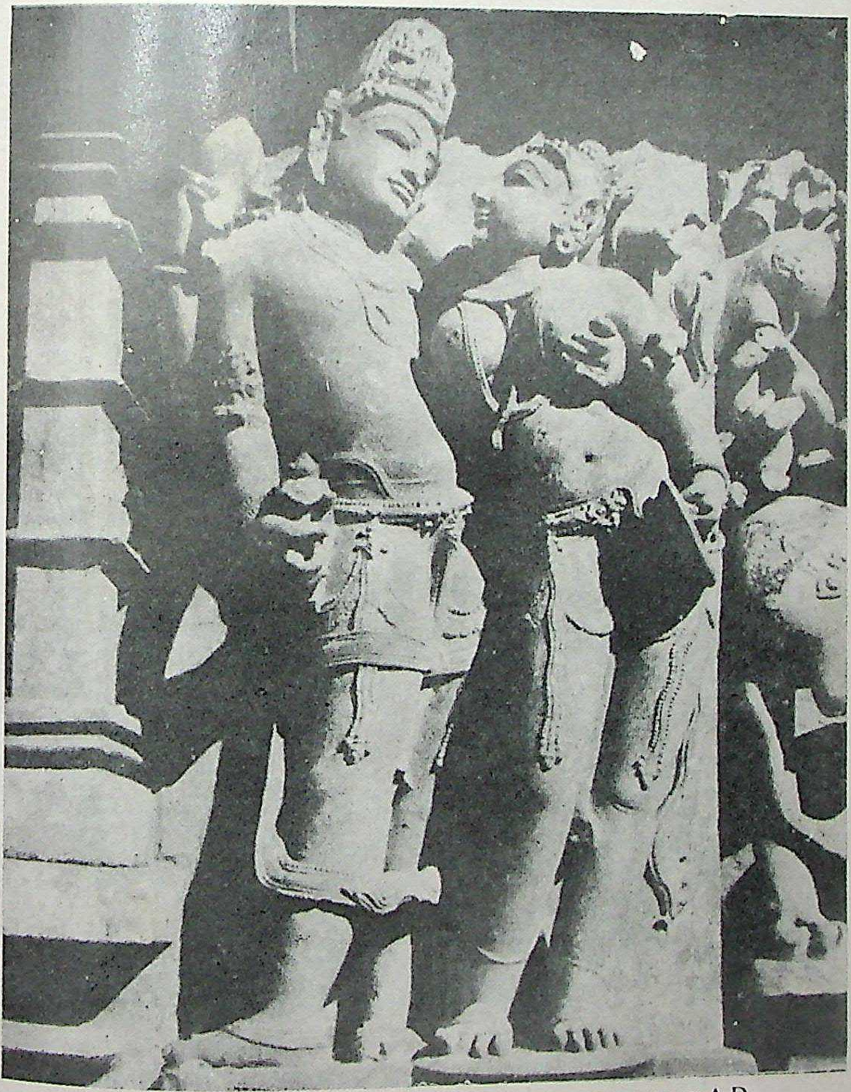
Krishna and Radha, miniature from Nurpur, about 1790 A.D.



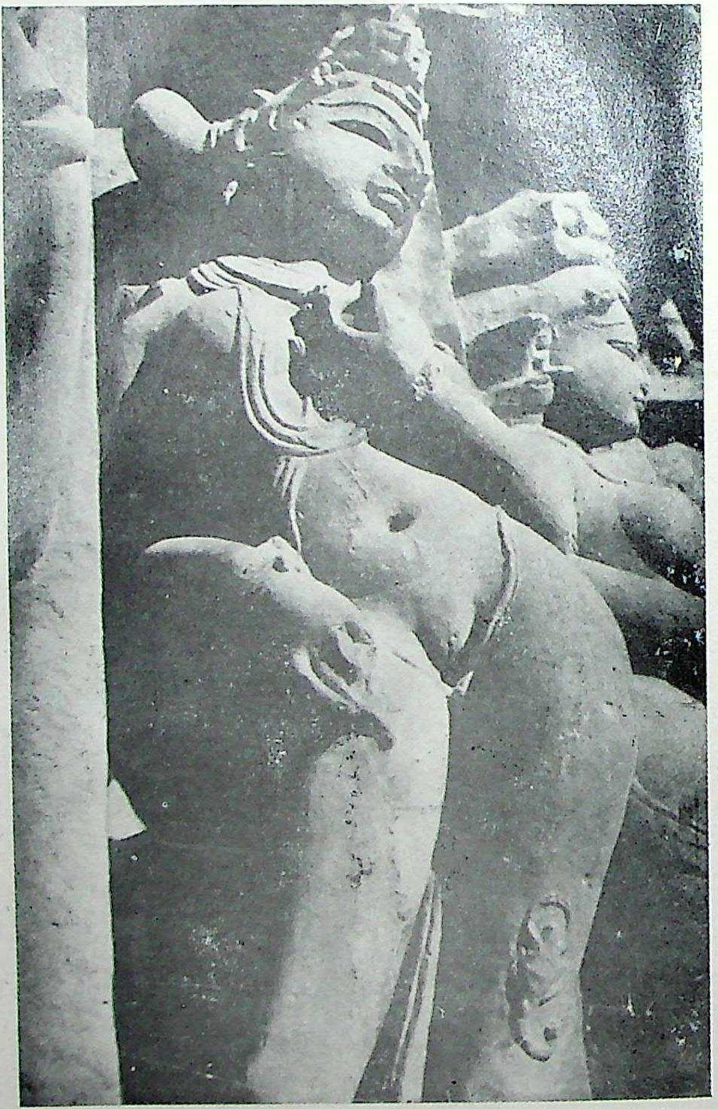
Rasa Lila, Pahari School, *Mankot Kalam*, Basohli idiom, 1740 A.D.



Cheerharan, *Mankot*, about 1700 A.D.

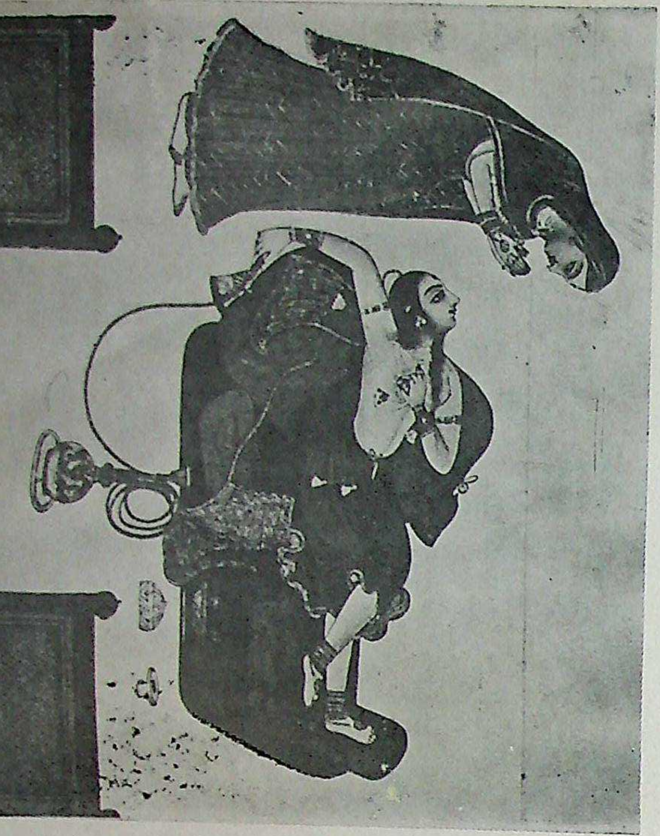


Divine lovers—Purshavanath Temple, Khajuraho, 10th century A.D.



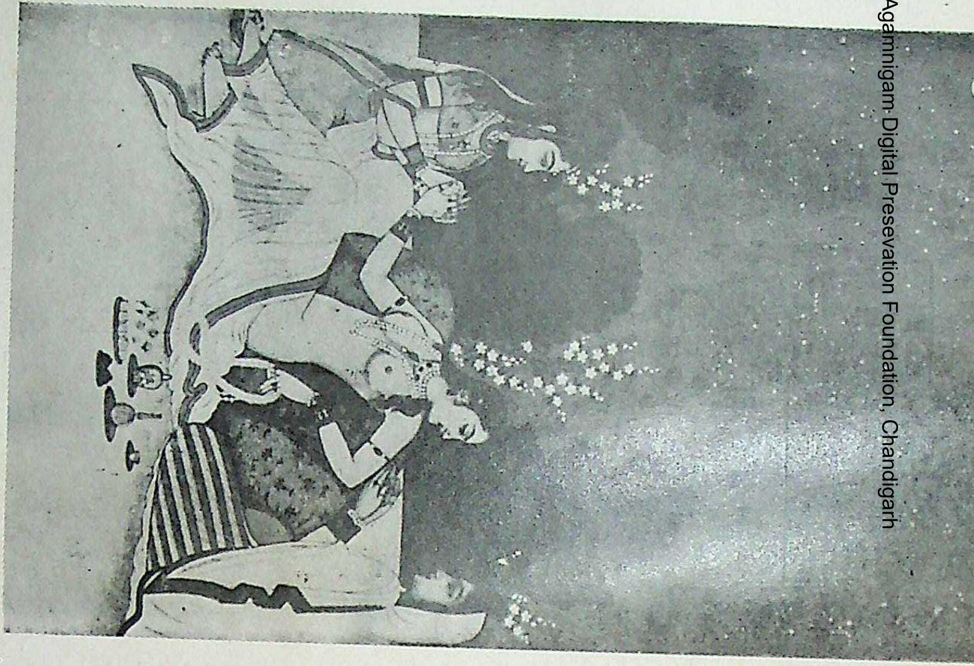
Woman with scorpian waiting for fulfilment of desire, Kandariya Mahadeva Temple, Khajuraho, 11th centary A.D.

Erotic figures in sexo-yogic pose—Vishvanath Temple, Khajurano, 11th century A.D.



Lady yearning for love, Rajasthan Bundi, the late 18th century.

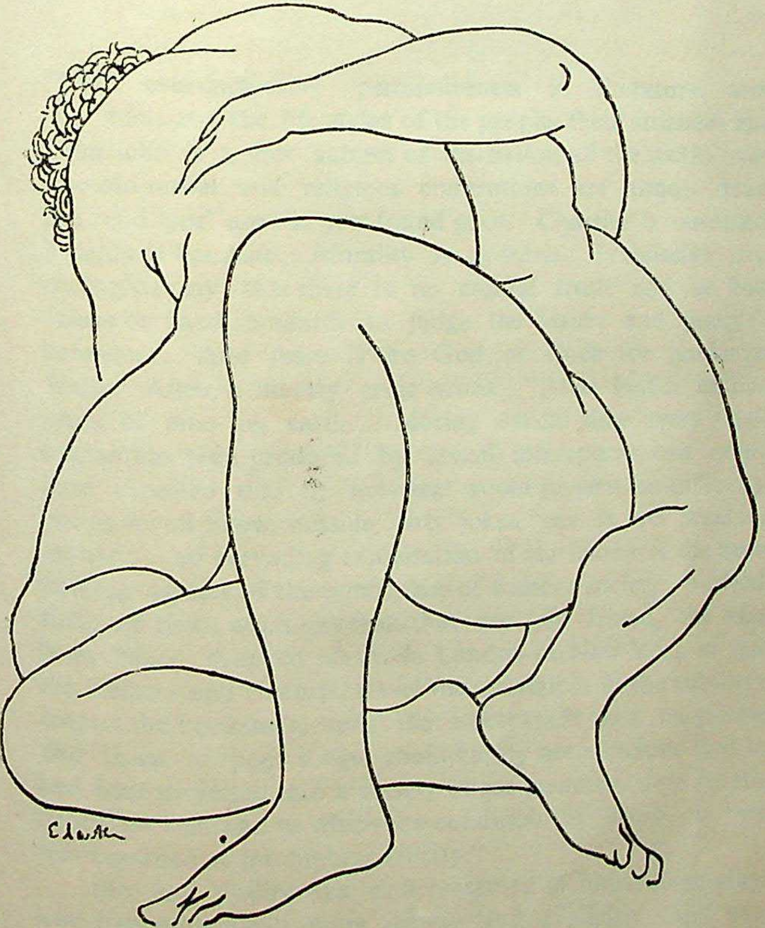
The lady on a terrace, Mughal, 1700 A.D.



CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation, Chandigarh

NOW

WE



9

Eroticism—the new cult

THE ever-increasing permissiveness in literature, arts, films and the life styles of the people, their attitudes and behaviour is a hot subject of discussion all the world over. The old moral and religious conventions are almost dead. Sex and 'pot' are the new found gods. Chastity is outdated. Fidelity is bondage. Morality is neurosis. Permissive psychologists say that there is no eternal truth and no final values or fixed standards to judge the issues and people's behaviour. And there is no God or Code for guidance. Walter Allen, a literary critic writes: "After half a million years of man on earth……during which time every single human has been produced by sexual intercourse, one might have expected that by now sex would present no difficulty; but as we all know, outside dirty jokes, sex is no laughing matter……all pervading exploitation of sex is one of the most striking aspects of the public face of western society. Indeed, there are times when one feels that our old friend, the Man from Mars, dropped down in London or New York to visit the theatres and cinemas, travel the escalators in the subways, inspect the bookstalls, read the newspapers and magazines and listen to pop songs, could hardly not conclude that he had been projected into a society whose members were permanently on heat and in which the condition of being on heat was regarded as the highest felicity."

Sex and nudity are now presented in films, stage plays and literature much more openly and explicitly than ever before. There was a time when Empror Augustus banished her daughter Julie for her 'extravagant promiscuous behaviour', in the year when Ovid's 'Art of Love' was published. And Ovid himself was later exiled. Even the Royal Proclamation against Vice and Immorality was made in 1787 and Shakespeare's plays were purged of 'those words and expressions which cannot with propriety be read in a family'. And a Family Shakespeare appeared in 1814.

Nobody can even think of such things in the present day permissive age. The sexual revolution in our time has brought within our grasp the freedom of sex never dreamt of before. There is a general relaxation in the sexual codes and traditional morals of yesteryears. The New Freedom means non-interference in the private lives of other people. How people behave sexually and develop and maintain their intimate sexual relationships is none of the business of the society and the state should desist from regulating the people's behaviour and from denying consenting couples the pleasure of sex in whatever form they want to enjoy.

The sexual revolution which started in the early sixties still goes on unabated. The two mainstay of our society—religion and marriage—have been almost smashed to pieces. Notwithstanding the Hare Krishna Hare Rama Kirtans, the Transcedental Meditation, the Krishna Cult, the Jesus Trip and the Guru phenomenon, the basic question asked by the young people all over the world is—'Is God Dead'? Perhaps 'yes', they say. With the death of God and the scientists, psychologists and anthropologists view of man being just another animal, the image of man and all his relationships are viewed in an amoral manner. The most important institution of marriage and consequently that of family have thus been subjected to microscopic examination and have been found outdated and damaging to sane living.

This has resulted into a new sex liberation movement which has not been witnessed before. "Anything goes" is the basic attitude of the youngmen of today. In the new atmosphere of moral relaxation the old standards and values are wanting in authenticity. And the standards of personal values are upgraded. Conventional taboos are sacrified at the altar of freedom of expression. Inhibiting social restrains are thrown overboard. There is marked change in the sex attitudes of today's generation. A lot of sex boutiques are springing up around the cities of U.S.A. and other western countries for selling playful erotica. "No smut shops. They are meant to provide a tasteful response to the sex revolution", says an owner of such a sex boutique. It is possible to foresee from present reliable indications the imminent commercial availability of porno cassettes, a development pioneered in the United States by Barney Rossett of Grove Press. As Rossett himself has said confidently, 'When the kids are in bed, you just slip the cassette into your TV and watch *Tropic of Cancer* or *The Story of 0* right in your living room'. The erotic sculpture of Khajuraho and Konark are a rage with the tourists not for their artistic grandeur but for their erotic appeal. *Mithun and maithun*, *apsaras*, *nayikas*, danseus, *sursundaris* and other manifestations of the nude and erotic heritage of our culture are popular with the present day audience.

Countries like Denmark, Sweden, Holland, Britain and the U.S.A. have changed the censorship laws to suit the new situations of a free society. Holland has published an official report recommending the abolition of film censorship for adults. The report examines whether film censorship conflicts with the freedom of speech. The Danish report on pornography (1966) and film censorship (1967) and the two Swedish reports on film censorship (1967 and 1969) examine the whole gamut of film censorship. In Denmark, adult film censorship came to an end in 1969. That was the first time that any parliament had ever abolished censorship. The regulations against pornographic books have also been removed.

It is observed that this relaxation of censorship has made the porno dealers run out of business. Coinciding with the removal of film censorship prohibition of pornographic pictures was also removed. Showing a variety of sexual perversions and acts of violence, a film in Sweden was banned in 1964. But the same film was passed for universal release after slight cuts on appeal. The Government restored acts of sex and violence of another film which was shown in the film festival held in London in 1968. The film 'They Call Us

Misfits' contained four-letter words, actual, unsimulated coitus for the first time in a feature film. The British Theatre Act 1968 abolished theatre censorship in the country. 'The Killing of Sister George' had lesbian seduction. 'I am Curious (Yellow)' showed nudity and exposed genitals. The Hollywood code too has been revised recently. These relaxations have made nudity on stage and in films popular amongst the audience. Eric Bentley writing in *New Republic*, August 16, 1969 says, "Girls' genitalia are not seen, or are not much to see. Their breasts, even with uncovered nipples, no longer provide the big surprise. Hefner has seen to this. No, the main reason for theatre-going in the late nineteen-sixties has been to see the penis. The penis has an enormous dual audience: first, women who after centuries of restraint have broken down and confessed that this is what they wish to see; and secondly, male homosexuals. It is probably important that alone among the erogenous zones, the penis is visually dynamic. Whether or not, on stage, its size actually varies, hope *does* spring eternal, and an audience is forever on the *qui vive* to see if a penis will do its thing. From striptease, then, to cocktease: such is the history of America in the sixties."

Dealing in erotica is a big business which generally is financed by organised crime. It is said that there is ten thousand per cent profit in pornographic business. This has given rise to a new kind of barbarism. What was limited and considered nice in bed room is now flaunted in films, plays and live shows. Sophia Loren was right when she said: "I believe there is a place for sex in films. But I would not take my clothes off for any role. If the dramatic impact is there, it isn't necessary to undress and make a display of yourself."

The new cut out dresses which give an illusion of nothing beneath are in vogue. Dress designing is a part of the new erotic scene. It is the tantalizing version of the man's sexual wishes—hot pants/see-through blouses and pants/panties/chemises/topless/bottomless/bikini-monokini and finally nokini. What has been prevalent in one's bedroom or private beaches or in the porno houses and restaurants and night clubs have now been worn by respectable women in broad day light on public streets. The aim is nothing but erotic arousal. Mary Quant has interesting observations to make: 'You know James Laver's famous fashion theory of the erogenous zone which shifts the focus of attraction in different periods from ankles, to hips, to breasts and so on...what is the erogenous zone of our present fashion period?...The crotch. This is a very balanced generation, and the crotch is the most natural erogenous zone. Clothes are designed to lead the eye to it. The way girls model clothes, the way they sit, sprawl, or stand is all doing the same thing. It's not "come hither", but it's provocative. She's standing there defiantly with her legs apart saying "I'm very sexy, I enjoy sex, I feel provocative, but you're going to have a job to get me. You've got to excite me and you've got to be jolly marvellous to attract me. I can't be bought but if I want you I'll have you."

Now that there is the pill, women are the sex in charge. They, and they only, can decide to conceive. But there is an ironical twist to this. She says that in the days when parents were too shy to tell their daughters about sex, girls were brought up on purely romantic ideas and when they married it was often a shock. Now, when sex is discussed everywhere and girls are prepared for it at school or at home, parents are shy of talking about romance and true love... 'Girls simply aren't prepared for the real thing. Then when it hits them, when they suddenly fall in love, it bowls them over completely, they just lose their heads, and that's when they get deliberately pregnant.'

The keynote of the new freedom is "I want to have what I want when I want and where I want it." "Anything goes" in the sunshine of the new morality. The most significant factor which triggered of the sexual revolution was the change brought about by the widespread use of 'rubber' and the 'pill'. The human relations have, consequently, undergone a change never witnessed before. The fact that extra or pre-marital relations could be maintained without risk of unwanted pregnancy has far reaching effects in the moral climate of our age. This has proved an impetus for the women's lib movement as Simone de Beauvior said that 'for a woman liberty begins in the womb'. The women's lib demands a pill for a man too which they hope will finally liberate them from man's tyranny and sexual politics and put them equal to men—freedom which they have aspired to but never achieved hitherto. Lester Graham says: 'The disappearance of prostitution makes no difference to the women's liberation movements. As far as the National Organization for Women (NOW), the Feminists, the Women's Liberation Front, the Society for Cutting Up Men (SCUM), and Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell (WITCH) are concerned, women everywhere remain in bondage to men and the time has come to break the shackles. Showing varying degrees of militancy, from NOW's thrust for political power to SCUM's declaration of guerrilla war on men, the feminist movements, first greeted as a put-on, have gathered national steam to an extent that probably few of the activists anticipated. In man-woman relationships, they are bound to exert a powerful influence. So far, their most apparent achievement has been to radicalize women's wear—WITCH members were the original "bra burners". They launched their campaign against published works "humiliating and degrading" to women, by capturing and occupying the executive offices of a publishing house where they protested against "one-dirty-old-man rule."

In general, the new feminist evaluation of the sex revolution is depressing. Valerie Solanis, author of the SCUM Manifesto, has prophesied that "our society, if it's not deflected from its present course, and if the Bomb doesn't drop on it, will hump itself to death." In their attempts to emancipate women from their straitjacket roles of sex symbol, mother, and housewife, the militants have invaded and disrupted meetings on sex, birth control, and the cost of living. In January 1970, they stormed a U.S. Senate hearing on the contraceptive pill, shrieking questions... "Why are no women testifying? Why are there no women on the sub-committee? *Why isn't there a male pill*?"

America's leading women's liberator, Gloria Steinem made yet another shocking statement that "Not many jobs require a penis or vagina and they should go to everybody. So why are only one per cent of American women provided with jobs".

The sexual revolution, on the one hand, has resulted in increased promiscuity and on the other in relaxation in the censorship and legal bondage. When people marry today they don't have the illusion that they are having sexual experience for the first time. No man marries a virgin now-a-days is the common belief. There was a time when men thought that the women they married have never been kissed, embraced or sexually related. Some years back, a newspaper report said that a five-year-old boy was treated for gonorrhoea by the Memphis' medical authorities. It was found that he had sexual relation with a nine-year old girl. The girl, however, refused the name of her previous partner. In the wake of free sex there are increased cases of S.T.D., infidelity, marital frustration, clandenstine prostitution, high rate of divorce, broken homes, unwanted pregnancies and abortions. The concept of old morality that sex was sinful and the flesh evil is thrown to winds. This resulted in sensual, hedonistic, pleasure-oriented sex fascism.

Campaigns against the seamy side of sexual revolution are being launched from time to time. In Britain, a Festival of Lights was organised to press the local authorities to ban certain films and to dissuade news agents from trading in Sex-Mags. They got signed a petition "For Decency" to deliver Britain from the erosion of moral values, increase of violence, lawlessness and the breakdown of family life. They say they face another Dunkirk (of the Second World War). It is now the considered view of many a writer that this neurotic preoccupation with sex which has almost reached the point of no return will lead to debasement of the emotional life and consequently to a new form of sexual tyranny. The most outspoken critic of the sexual revolution, David Holbrook, has said that sexual revolution was placing limits on people's capacity to develop a real enjoyment of sexual love by reducing it to sexuality. When a nation is so much obsessed with sex and a society is saturated with animalism in its approach to intimate human relationships it is no freedom but tyranny.

10

Pornography—the new freedom

"PORNOGRAPHY is a kind of romance," writes Peter Michelson in his book "*The Aesthetics of Pornography*, "no more pernicious than the romances of passion that rule the life of Emma Bovary."

He calls pornography as the imaginative record of man's sexual will which documents man's neurotic as well as archetypal concerns with sexuality.

This is another shot in the arm of the Porn zealots who are struggling hard to raise the status of pornography to that of aesthetic expression. The libertarian writers and artists had welcomed this book. They found an added support for their crusade against censorship of the pornographic material—of course, in the name of the freedom of speech and on the plea that the state has no right to regulate the 'moral' life of her people which is a matter of one's personal values. Any interference by the state is an attack on one's privacy. In its zeal to control pornography, the state often suppresses the works of arts and literature.

The U.S. Commission on Obscenity and Pornography has already expressed its opinion that restrictive controls on pornography are unjust and untenable and thus need to be removed or relaxed. The majority report of the Commission says that pornography cannot be proved to cause crime, sexual deviation or severe emotional disturbances. This view is not fully in accord with the findings of another U.S. Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence. The Commission found that violence on the screen has some adverse cumulative effect on the human behaviour. Former President Nixon of U.S.A. was so enraged by the Commission on Pornography that he called it "morally bankrupt" and promised to brush away its findings and recommendations. The U.S. Senate rejected the Commission's Report by a vote of 60 to 5.

Women lib activists proclaim pornography as men's handiwork perpetrated against women. It is a part of man's conspiracy to deprive women of their humanity and to emphasise their sexuality. In pornographic work generally the women are at the centre as sex object. Even the term 'pornography' which originally meant, 'writing by harlots' is coined by men. Pornography thus is another manipulated device in sexual politics. Pornographic films show women copulating with ageing beasts of burden. "Live shows" exhibit women's assorted bottoms and boobs.

The women's lib asserts that women have never been the creators of pornography (though one of the 'best' pornographic work, *L' Historied 'O* was written by a woman). They say that women tend to be the indifferent consumers of pornography. (Colin Macinn writing about the first European Sex Film Festival in Amsterdom in 1970 said that the audience was very beautiful. . . They were preponderantly in the late twenties, with about as many women as men).

Pornography has not escaped the political onslaught against it. Herbert Marcuse condemning the mass communication media's emotional debasing of human behaviour objects to sexual permissiveness because it is a safety valve that keeps people from exploding and breaking up the system. "Pornography makes men tame," he says. He proclaims that relaxation of sexual taboos is a sort of capitalist plot.

Prof. Walter Berns of the University of Toronto believes that pornography has definitely deleterious effect upon the moral climate as a whole and on values generally. Pornography makes men shameless and brute and leads to tyranny. Pornography is attacked, thus, both from the left and the right and not necessarily by the middle aged moralists alone.

Then what are the facts ? No body can say with certainty that it has no harmful effects on its consumers. Or it has. A number of genuine as well as pseudoscientific studies have been conducted and the conclusions reached which can be quoted by both the protagonists and the antagonists of pornography to prove the validity of their view points.

One of such studies on the responses to the sex related material says that the two-thirds of its respondents replied that pornographic material excites people sexually. The three-fifths replied that it provides information about sex, and about half said that sex material provides entertainment/leads to rape/to breakdown in morals/improve sex relations of some married couples. The later opinions seems to be based on heresy than on scientific data. The nature of response to pornography can best be studied by knowing what essentially pornography is.

The essence of pornography is no doubt mendacity. Pornography, being the verbal or visual portrayal of perverted sex, aims directly at the masturbatory fantasies of the frustrated or the deviated. Further, it demeans sex. Even D.H. Lawrence, the author of the 'notoriously obscene' novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, has a case against pornography. "Pornography is the attempt to insult sex, to do dirt on it. .... The insult to the human body, the insult to a vital human relationship! Ugly and cheap they make the human nudity, ugly and degraded they make the sexual act, trivial and cheap and nasty".

No sane person will deny sex of its vital role in human life. But sex also needs a balanced placement in the whole scheme of human existence. Pornography disturbs this balance. It depicts and debases sex out of all proportion. It drives a wedge between one's sexual life and the whole life. It depicts sexual acts of a perverse nature and sometimes of such fantastic nature that it passes the limits of physical possibility. Such works encourage a solitary fantasy which often ends in masturbation. Pornographic book or a picture is thus a substitute for a sex partner. The goal is not sublimation even not catharsis as some defenders of pornography are prone to say but is incantation in the service of sex release. It is repetitive and thus a meaningless activity. Precisely for this reason, E.M. Forster has dubbed pornography as bad because "it inclines the mind to run round and round in a circle instead of going forward and gaining strength". A lady's comment on erotic paintings can be safely quoted here: "Once you have seen one Persian penis, you have seen them all." But how many people will stop at that?

It has not been conclusively proved that a saturation point reaches in case of porn-addicts. A normal human being may be bored by the repeated exposure to porno material. As it is said that "in the end the insensate pursuit of the urge to shock carried from one excess to a more abysmal one, is bound to achieve its own antidote in total breakdown. When there is no lower depth the descent to ennui will erase the problem." But the creators of pornography continue the 'situations' in their work in such a manner that orgasm is never reached. Otherwise any carrying over of the 'situation' will result in an anti-climax. One would be bold enough to say that pornography is not a masturbatory device, it does not lead to sexual regression or infantile sexuality. In one study that became notorious, measuring devices were attached to 23 male organs while the subjects were exposed day after day to erotic literature. It showed that men can be satiated by constant exposure to pornography.

It is true that all people may not respond to pornography in the same manner or to the same extent. For some it may satisfy their sexual and sadistic impulses. For some it may have no effect and for others the temptation to emulate may be compelling. Hard core pornography emphasises our animality and hints at the possibilities awaiting us. It may not provide an immediate stimulus to action. There may not be any general increase in sexual activity following exposure to sex material. But it vitiates the atmosphere. The actual cumulative danger is more for the sexually deviated than for a 'normal' person. The real danger is of its perculative effect and in creating a climate for delinquency.

The permissive society has forced on the people a pornographic and sexually dominated sub-culture. What was once R is now GP and what was X a year ago is now R. Thus hot shots are shown in films for general release that would certainly have been cut a few years ago. Sex and violence have been intermixed. Sadistic sex orgies are favourite with the porn-addicts. The barrel of the gun is put in the mouth of a girl who sucks in passionately. No body will mistake the obvious allusion. Irving Kristal has remarked that what is at stake is the human civilization and humanity and the quality of life on which democratic values ultimately thrive.

It will be too much to say that pornography has no effect on human mind and behaviour. This is in fact denying the word its power. If books cannot influence the people for evil they are not expected to do good either. But we have been hearing for long that some books have influenced people and inspired for acts of heroicism and philanthropy. Pornography informs, educates and influences in precisely the same manner and perhaps to same extent as any other behavioural technique.

The contention that pornographic works have deleterious effects on their consumers has not gone unchallenged and even has been proved fallacious by studies and experiments especially by the experiences of the people in Sweden and Denmark where the circulation of porno material is said to have considerably decreased after the lifting of the censorship and legal controls. Of course, pornography becomes more open when it emerges from underground and has reason to expect a welcome. Certainly this is the case in societies where there is the reign of new morality. The question, however, is debatable whether the increasing emphasis on sexuality causes the growth of pornography or the increase in pornography results in over-sexuality.

But what Walter Allen says is true : "We do not know whether or in what sense or when pornography corrupts or tends to corrupt. All we can say with confidence is that it always existed and always will so long as men and women have sexual fantasies they cannot realize, for whatever reason in real life".

11

Censorship—to be or not to be

IN France, a few years back, a General of the Salvation Army S.A., disrupted the performance of the American musical 'Hair'. He was accompanied by 25 commandos of virtue. Why did he do so? When asked he said that he had launched his anti-erotica operation on behalf of the 'silent majority'. The result was just opposite. The American musical drew still larger crowds. The audience retorted: Why did the deaths in Vietnam and Biafra not trouble his conscience?

In USA, all the participants of the play 'che' at the Lower Sea Side Theatre of New York were arrested. The producer, the director, and the actors were held up by the police on the charges of exhibition of nudity and sexual actions in public. The charge, "portrayal of pornography, open sexual and homosexual relations presented on the stage".

In another city, Miami, about 3000 young men and women participated in "anti-obscenity demonstration". Their slogan was "Down with Obscenity".

In Britain, the Appeals Court banned a controversial film dealing with nudes, lesbians, homosexuals—only four hours before it was to be screened on a nation-wide television. The documentary, incorporating the use of four-letter word, focusses on the works of the American pop artist and film maker Andy Warhol.

The Indian Parliament debated the current state of affairs in our films and a number of Members argued that our films projected a perverted image of the Indian culture and society and by and large are vulgar, lewd, erotic and had depraving effect on the mind of the young and promote crime and violence.

What is at stake, the lovers of censorship claim, are morality, culture, liberty, social responsibility and so on. This seems to be the view of the official agencies as well. The cry against sex in films is not a new one. Read these comments: "Sophisticated sex, drinking scenes; divorce, seduction, the use of drugs were presented in film after film as symbols of the fashionable life." Films are portraying "false sex standards, incitement to sexual emotions, glorification of crime and criminals and debasing brutality." These words were uttered as early as 1920.

To present sex and nudity on stage, TV and screen in an uninhibited manner is a target of the authorities on one side and the public demanding ban on sex exhibitionism on the other. The debate in more advanced countries is on the issue whether complete intercourse, simulated or effective, should be permitted or not on the screen and the stage. But there is the third party in this whole episode which often is neglected and ignored, that is, the producers, the writers, the directors and a host of other creative artists. It is this class which is more concerned in safeguarding its fundamental right of freedom of creative expression. They are in no mood to bear with the authorities, arbitrary and uninformed interference in their creative expression.

Reinhard Hauff, the German director and actor, felt that in the West sex was sometimes used very cleverly to undermine a political system. Sex often became a symbol of personal freedom and implied liberation from the pattern of behaviour approved by the State. A scene which Hauff's father did not like in The Sudden Riches, in which Hauff rapes a woman on a dining table, was explained by Hauff very cogently. He said the scene denotes that when a man fails to achieve his social ambitions he is just like an animal because of his suppressed anger.

Such films provoke criticism for the fact that they played too much and too frankly on the themes of sex and violence. The answer to this came from Dr. Ernest Krueger who said films were a true mirror of life and there was a lot of violence in European life today. But the self-controlled Board of Cinematography, which he heads, can refuse a film for screening if it determines that a certain film has sex and violence in an artistically unpalatable form. However, this organisation does not come down too hard on the films it previews. The real emphasis, Dr. Krueger said, was on ensuring that permissive films, even though artistic were not seen by young people and so a very large number of films were given the 'A' (adults only) certificate. We should not forget, however, that there are artists who are against a couple kissing on the screen partly from the point of view, as Francois Truffant says, because camera was quite incapable of capturing their intimacy.

All over the world, there is a new wave to portray sex in frank, bold and realistic manner and the producers are not shy of bare body spread on the wide screen. The *Plain Truth* listed 12 films from 1910 to 1971 in one of its issues, and says that the films have progressed "from a degree of control to anything goes". The listing is as under:

1. The 1910's—Silent Slapstick—the Keystone Kops. 2. The 1920's—Sublimated Sex; post-war romance and permissiveness. 3. The 1930's—Laurel and Hardy—humour to escape the pangs of depression. 4. The 1940's—'Gone With the Wind'—prudery exhibited by the national flap caused by the word "damn." 5. The 1950's—'The Moon is Blue'—was suggested for mature audiences only due to the use of words such as virgin, seduce, and pregnant. 6. The 1960's—The first half of the decade was an extension of the 1950's desire for simplicity in a spectacle—with Mary Poppins...."To anything goes" 7. Lolita (1962)—Adultery and illicit love introduced. 8. Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? (1966) —First use of profanity and blatant cursing in a major movie. 9. Bonnie and Clyde (1967)—First use of graphic violence and slow-motion killing. 10. "The Fox" (1968)—Lesbianism introduced into the movies. 11. 'Midnight Cowboy' (1969)—First "X" rated film to win a prize. 12. 'Clockwork Orange' (1971)—The

"ultimate" combination: ultraviolence, perverted sex, and demonism. What next?"

The journal adds "What most Americans may have considered "shocking" just a few years ago is now accepted with not so much as a blush or a blink. Since our moral standards change gradually, we don't realize how much difference a few years have made. In 1965 a swear word was considered shocking, but in 1970, an X-rated movie (Midnight Cowboy) was awarded the "Best Picture of the Year" Oscar. Another GP-rated film opens with a lone woman in an isolated house who is brutally raped by a stranger with a stocking over his face. The rape scene is filled with the woman's screams as the intruder rips off her clothes. Meanwhile the children "unaccompanied by parent or guardian" passively absorb the violence."

The film has become a powerful medium of this nude wave in the countries like USA, Britain, Sweden, Denmark France, Italy and Japan. The result is a tension between the producers and the play-wrights on the one side and the law enforcing authorities and censorship on the other. On one side there is a demand for more and more freedom to portray sex in its all fury and glory and on the other side the censor's scissors is becoming more and more sharp, indiscriminate and unpredictable.

In India, the feud between the censors and cinema is an old one. We too, confront this question, earlier asked in other countries: should films and plays be censored at all; if so, what are the guiding principles, the code and the limits? In Bombay, two significant plays were not allowed to be staged by the Stage Performance Scrutiny Board as the writers refused to change the script as suggested by the Board. Of these plays, one was by the eminent play-wright Pratap Sharma, 'A Touch of Brightness' and the other was 'Sakharam Binder' by renowned play-wright Vijay Tendulkar. Tendulkar's play was lauded for its "obscene dialogue and simulated copulation, with orgasmic voices. No body can charge these writers of being motivated by prurient interest.

When and where the censor's scissors should come into action? What should be the qualifications of the members of the Censor Board, so that they might not abuse their authority and should move in accordance with the changing climate of new values and morality. Should censorship be voluntary or enforced by authorities? Should there be pre-censorship of films? Should screen script be subjected to censorship to avoid financial loss to the producers? These are the few significant questions which need to be answered in recommending any policy of censorship. The Enquiry Committee on Film Censorship headed by Justice G.D. Khosla has grappled with these and many other questions, and had given its findings and recommendations to the Government. The Committee says: "If in telling the story, it is logical, relevant or necessary to depict a passionate kiss or a nude human figure, there should be no question of excluding the shot, provided the theme is handled with delicacy and feeling, aiming at aesthetic expression and avoiding all suggestion of unnecessary prurience or lasciviousness". The Committee has clearly stated that the censorship policy be applied to protect children—"Children between 10 and 15 are most vulnerable to evil influences. They must be protected from all evil and depraving impacts. The censorship applicable to films which the children may be prevented from seeing will be more extensive and wider in scope than the code for adults because a restriction which may well be deemed unreasonable when applied to adults may be adjudged reasonable in reference to young and immature minds. This can best be achieved by strictly classifying films as fit for universal exhibition (U), for general exhibition (G) and for exhibition to adult audience only (A)."

In America, the ratings have been more liberalised. "The 1968 guide to motion picture viewing—G: All ages admitted, general audiences. GP: All ages admitted, parental guidance suggested. R: Restricted, under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian, proof of age required. X: No one under 17 admitted. Proof of age required."

In India, film industry has varied reactions to the recommendations of the Khosla Committee. Prominent film stars have given their views both in favour as well as against the recommendations. The most debated point was to kiss or not to kiss. The majority of them have interpreted the recommendations for vulgar display of nudity and simulated sex action for the obvious purpose of success at the box office. Their eye is on the lowest common denominator to appeal to the prurient interest. Sex and nudity are the best money earning devices. The producers prefer to use their newly earned freedom for vulgar and provocative exhibition of naked human flesh and the erotic and cabaret's stimulated sensuality, rather than going deep in the human psyche and exploring the most intimate human relationship as well as the social malady of our time.

In other countries where the censorship laws have been relaxed both the box office films and art films have been flourishing side by side. On the one side there are erotic, nude and vulgar exhibition of sexual relationship motivated only by one factor, *i.e.*, their potential and real power of sexual arousal and on the other there are films which probe into man's predicament, his loss of identity and the deep sense of alienation. These films try to understand man's existential situation and present this in an artistic and imaginative manner.

There are critics who prefer pornography to hypocricy and false morality. They indict those who tolerate every type of social and individual degradation, corruption, and lust for power as well as the vulgar display of wealth and ostentious living. But they are more prudent in matters of sex and its frank manifestations. They will rather paint the over-sized breasts on the display hoardings black, rather than exposing the racket of call-girls for licences, permits and political horse trading. Such people smash clay female busts displaying brassiers and other female accessories and brush cinema posters black which display semi-clad men and women embracing each other or nearly kissing or just posing in an alluring and inviting manner.

The old moral values are undergoing rapid change. The stage, the literature and the films are now more sensitive and bold to portray sex and to exercise their newly awakened conscience and freedom for frank depiction of sex. The promising producer Peter Sneil has asked for presenting nude and sexual intercourse in films without any inhibition or censor's restriction. He said, "What the people want, they have a right to have it. Film does not aim at all the people, what they should like to be, but what they are in reality. In love play, a film should not be debarred to show intercourse because the climax of all love play is orgasm."

What is being shown in films is really amazing and perhaps shocking to those who have not understood the deep inroads which the new freedom has created into our traditional morality. Richard Michael says that a late taboo to be wrangled over was the much-publicised question of allowing female pubic hair. This was finally decided as yes in 1969, for the ordinary British viewer, but local Watch Committees can still come up with a few surprises. The next taboo to be lifted almost immediately, though not in the anatomical sense, meant fleeting glimpses of the penis, and Ken Russell's sequence of Oliver Reed and Alan Bates sporting in the nude was hailed as the breakthrough (a perfectly tasteful wrestling episode which quite failed to capture the meaning from the book). Simulated intercourse (at least in head and shoulders close-ups or with bizarre stipulations like the horizontal bed lover keeping one foot on the floor) has been a feature of the movies for most of its history, despite the rigours of the Hollywood Protection Code and its stern admonitions against 'open-mouthed' kissing. Actual intercourse with genitals in action is a last dividing line between pornography and official tolerance, yet even here a more respectable output has grown under the guise of sex instruction films.

The small producers are copying the big guns to earn easy money. They designate their films—experimental, underground or *cinema verti*, to prove that real and final revolution is only in bed-room and all experiments are in co-bedding. They call it a great cultural revolution. I Am Curious (Yellow); 'I Am Curious (Blue),' 'Hair,' 'The Killing of Sister George,' 'Frankenstein', 'Che,' 'Oh Calcutta,' 'Clockwork Orange,' 'W R-The Anatomy of Organism,' and a host of other films are the examples of the new cinema. Some of these films are the portrayal of Sexpol, *i.e.*, sexual politics inspired by the social psychologist Wilhelm Reich.

It is essential to study the entire question of censorship with sympathy and understanding. Sex must not be subjected to prudery or Victorian morality. It should have its normal and healthy expression. Any restriction on sex is bound to defeat its purpose. It is a fact that generally law trails behind the social change and new ideas. That is why the intelligentia in India wants an end to double-standards of censorship which put its heavy hand on Indian films shown in India and allowing kissing etc. in the same films for showing abroad. Similarly, the foreign films are not subjected to many cuts which the Indian films are to face. That is why the foreign films have a great black-market clientage in our country.

There is a demand for a total end of censorship in certain quarters because sexual revolution is a reality. Censorship is against all what is natural, healthy true and beautiful. But the real question is not to end censorship completely and finally and allow the money sharks to exploit the natural urges of man but to educate and enlighten the people to help them develop good taste, aesthetic values and healthy attitudes towards sex and all its manifestations.

12

Films—the bare body

THE nude wave is in ascendence. More so on the screen. The omnipresent media of film present nudity and sex in their glamorous as well as sordid form. The western cinema is frankly presenting sex and nudity on the screen. Bare bosoms and bottoms are now common scenes in these films. Even serious films have compulsory nude scenes. Ken Russel's 'The Devils,' Kubrick's 'A Clockwork Orange' and Polanski's 'Macbeth' display both the erotic illusion of nudity as well the harsh actuality of nakedness. 'Son of Easy Rider' and 'One O'Clock Cowboy' put across nudity without any sense of shame or guilt. Rather these films indulge in nude scenes under the 'compulsion of the theme'. The biblical themes are handled in a manner which might outrage the susceptibility of the 'revering audience'. In John Huston's 'The Bible,' Adam and Eve are shown naked in the Garden as they were before the Fall. And after the Fall they tried to hide their bare bodies with large fig leaves.

After the spectacular success of 'Chetna', a new wave has come into vogue in the Indian films which exhibits near nude or semi nude men and women, stripping, rape and bed-room scenes. Songs and dances with simulated coital actions and voices are more popular with the producers and the audience alike. 'Apradh', a film with nudity par excellence, depicted gruesome murder of semi nude Faryal in a bath tub. 'Johnny Mera Nam' had tantalizing exposure and erotic gestures of a cabaret dancer. 'Sharmilee' had a brutal rape scene and violent sex.

In fact, Babu Ram Ishara's 'Chetna' was a trend setter with its inviting undressing of a call girl and her image making naked legs on advertisement stills. Nudity is a big business now. Gone are the days of suggestive deflowering of a maiden with the accompaniment of thunderstorm and lightening and trembling of lamps and the broken glasses. I.M. Kunnu's 'Zaroorat' makes the leading lady to slip in and slip out of other people's beds with scenes of undressing and hanging of bra near the bed and after-coitus effects. These films advertise 'A' with much fanfare. 'A' is an advertisement frame in which erotic scenes are fitted.

The Malayalam films have created a sensation in the Indian film world. Director I.V. Sasi's 'Avalude Ravukkal' (Her Nights) with its explicit sexual overtones and nudity has been very popular with the audience. It created a stir in the other regional cinema too.

In fact, it was Raj Kapoor who started the trend with Padmini and later with Simi's exposure in 'Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai' and 'Mera Nam Joker' respectively and then in 'Bobby'. Simi was one up in 'Siddhartha' with fulsome nudity and simulated coitus. Apart from 'Her Nights,' other films which have been the rage of the voyeur audience are 'Ithe Ivide Vare' (an adulterous affair of a mother), 'Vaadikaikkum' (unfulfilled sexual needs of a young woman), and 'Yeeta' (a story of a nymphomaniac), and 'Satrathil Ore Raathri' (A night in the resthouse). The Tamil film 'Pappathi' is more bold than 'Her Nights' and more shocking than the 'Sexy Dreams'. The film is a porno approximation in which the topless heroine sucks the goat's milk with teat-to-teat titilation. Now actors are appearing in near nudity and are giving currency to male nudity for the benefit of female voyeurs and as well as for the gays. They could lift their legs over the thighs of the heroines almost showing their genitals. Another Tamil film Segappo Rojakkal (Red Roses) is a story of a sex sadist and goes one step forward when the man seeks young beautiful girls for sexual assaults and then buries them in the graveyard. He relishes the red roses which blossom on their graves. Apparently, it has been plainly lifted from one of the American porno sex sadist films.

Sex, crime and killings vie with each other to seek the mass audience. More often these are bundled together to reach the lowest depths of sensationalism. An ad of a recent film says: "REBELS & RAPISTS and a dangerous dancing girl turn a desert into hot-bed of VIOLENCE, MURDER & SEX". To advertise violence, murder and sex with a view to glamourize acts of sadism especially in the sphere of sexual perversion and create a hallow around a gangster has no doubt dangerous implications, more so, when one has little involvement or no involvement with the gangster-criminal hero.

There is a close relationship between sex and violence. These provide fascinating scenerios and close-ups for success. The violent crimes are committed in a manner that there is not only sexual stimulation but also sadistic pleasure. Even Mary McCarthy confessed in a discussion that her reaction to cinema cruelty was of a sexual response.

The plea behind the current craze for nudity is that the "story demands it". Nudity is not for nudity sake. This may be true in regard to certain films like Rajendra Singh Bedi's 'Dastak' or films like 'Anubhav' and 'Phir Bhi'. Bedi's bold treatment of the theme would justify the revealing of the heroine's anatomy and the bed-room love. The Khosla Committee's recommendation that a kiss can be introduced or the body shown naked if the integral situation in the films demand is very sensible. It was to offset the performance of a "unilateral act of coitus" in our films says the Committee's report.

But the question is how many producers are adhering to this recommendation for the sake of the story. They use the nude scene for other reasons to satisfy the prurient interest of the audience. But we must not overlook the fact that in the present permissive age sex and nudity occupy more prominant position than the inhibited and guilt conscious portrayal of man's most intimate relations. Depicting sex and nudity in films is no moral offence but to reduce it to dirt and vulgarity is a matter which cannot be easily dismissed. In India, too, there is growing demand for relaxation of censorship and the libertarian among them are asking for more frank depiction of sex themes on the screen. Is display of nudity a matter of sex or exhibitionism or of economic compulsion? Paul Raymond writes that despite adverse criticism from Press and profession, it is a salutary fact that plays embracing nudity are a box office success and while feeling pity for the starving Thespian who despises God's greatest creation, the human body, it is the paying customer who decides what is required.

But once the naked body becomes a promotional commodity there is no end to use it for box office success. How much flesh is exposed to the artificially excited eye and what are the possibilities of camera manipulations? Who knows that the audience will not scream "take it off too" for the last strip. The Indian actress Simi in one of the interviews said that only people who would criticize her for doing the nude scenes in 'Siddhartha' were catty actresses only because they do not have figure for nude scenes. If they had good figure they would do it willingly.

Is the display of the nude body on the screen a matter of good figure only? Sometime back, "Equity", the British Actors' Equity Association Journal, published an article: *Is nudity good for our business*? The author was Leslie Gluzer, an actor of no less repute. Condemning the "appalling trend towards complete nudity", he says that films showing nude scenes are "nothing more than sleazy Soho strip shows". He asked "Who is partly to blame for this?. We are! Because it would seem that some of us will do anything for money. We will allow managers to desecrate our dignity and at the same time encourage audiences who should be worthy of better things, to leave nothing more than a pack of raincoated voyeur." Michael Holbrook was so much disgusted with this "cultural pollution" and "sex fascism" that he said, "I do not want to return to an England in which such a crime against human dignity and value can be committed daily, and nothing is done about it."

There is much more involved in this business of nudity than the exhibition of the body beautiful or the demand of the story or aesthetic compulsion or the climate of the new morality. It is not nudity that is the central issue, but the difficulty of finding employment. The over-prudish girl will risk her career if she refuses to do the nude scene in the present day competitive market. Can a film star refuse to take her clothes off when more and more girls are available to strip? She will be a brave woman to refuse the nude or rape scene. This may drive her out of profession. She is under pressure or compulsion to do the nude scene which she might have refused if she had economic security. Even the established stars feel threatened by the new actresses who are more than ready to strip. It is perhaps becoming more and more difficult to dictate terms to the producers. The audience have become more and more demanding in "let me see your slip." This is due to the reason because the body comes first and the skills later.

Women libs are right in proclaiming display of nude females as a part of man's conspiracy to deprive women of their humanity and to emphasise their sexuality. It portrays woman as a body, a sex object, a thing. And men too are degraded by the implicit assumption that they won't buy a product or see a film unless "tempted by the idea that their only motivation is an illusion, consummation with the girl on the screen."

13

Advertising—the female factor

A night club of legs
Legs like roads with coloured lights to drive along
To watch is to be shown more
Texture discloses texture
Lace. Stocking. Ring. Hand within stocking
Nails outside. Nails within. Skin of the hand
Skin of the leg behind the stocking
Bare thigh. Flower petal.

A SKIN DREAM

BARE body has great fascination for the advertisers especially with strong sex appeal. Even if they have to advertise their clothes, whether for men or women they will like to discard the same very clothes which they advertise. An advertisement in a journal in France a few years ago showed a very handsome youngman who was completely naked. It advertised a new model of underwear. The ad was criticised for the reason that he discarded the garment which he was supposed to promote. There was a similar advertisement with a nude woman in it. The caption read: "Madam don't bathe alone any longer".

The nude figures in the advertisements are used both as the fact and the motif for selling a product—cosmetics to cars and computers. A model of a new car is advertised with nude women aside the car.

John Lennon and Yoko Ono showed themselves naked both sides on the cover of their record "Two Virgins". There was a protest. In America, the public opinion was agitated over an advertisement showing a nude woman in a *Yoga Asan* with a flower in her mouth and an eye painted on her belly. The London Transport Authorities refused a poster that showed Venessa Redgrave completely nude though covering her breasts with her hands advertising Ken Russel's film 'Isadora'. Who can forget the career launching calendar of Marilyn Monroe which has helped her to rise to stardom and make her mark as the greatest sex symbol.

Sex goes well with nudity. Products were advertised exploiting the longing of men and women for each other. Even the suggestion is mutual love making: "Ever slept with a continental, if you have not, you don't know what you are missing".

The great nude boom began and is well entrenched in post middle-class market and in the glossy women magazines. These advertisements move around women and aim at women, even if the product is to be used by men. No matter whether it is an after shave lotion, a shirt or a neck-tie or an underwear. It is very difficult to say that whether such types of advertisements are sex-oriented or simply lesbian-oriented. Richard Michael writes "For the first time in modern cities, enormous numbers of adults live alone, with all the freedom and inhibition such privacy entails. The only other naked bodies they are likely to see are those of lovers, and models in magazine photographs; but their own can become known to them in a way impossible to members of a shared Victorian household, as they wander naked about their lonely, centrally-heated rooms, squeeze blackheads idly in front of mirrors or loiter in hot baths."

This, obviously, is the audience at which the new nude publicity is directed. It is auto-erotic in implication stressing the pleasures you can give to your own body with the application of soaps and cosmetics, the touch of silk stockings and underwear. It is no accident that female models are used to advertise women's as well as men's products. The intention is that you should identify the pictured body with your own, transfer the desirability of its superb proportion and suntanned flesh in your imagination to your own less glamorous physique.

The result has been a mental equation of nudity with sexuality. The only nakedness we know comes in a sexual context, in a form which leads us to blend our own bodies in fantasy with idealised shapes of impossible physical perfection.

The underground press like OZ: International Times and Time Out published classified ads for seeking homosexual relationship.

This has stirred up the legal authorities and the action was launched against the offending parties. "It is illegal for one person to advertise for another for sexual purposes, no matter if the partners are male, female or beasts of the field". But their reply was what about matrimonials. Aren't these also advertising for sex partners, of course, through the institution of marriage which is public confession of strictly private intentions.

But there is no objection if there is suggestion of a partner, not the real human being. An ad for sofa sets says: Slumberdown/Surrender to its warm embrace/14 nights free trial. Our arms were made to hold you. Another furniture dealer claimed in his ad that no woman who has slept on his brand of sofa has ever been unsatisfied. An advertisement which includes a male lover, aims not at the lover in the advertisement but at the onlooker. She looks away from the advertised man or she looks out of the advertisement towards the man who considers himself her true lover, *i.e.*, the ad looker.

Everything from bras to super stars are advertised as being sexy, to infatuate the onlooker—Sex kitten, sex bomb, sex symbol, etc. These are the advertising images to attract the prospective client. The ad man is all know man—nobody understands a girl like he does. The consumer research director of an US advertising agency, Mr Bruce John Morrison, tested advertisements to determine what men and women consider sexy. For males, 46 per cent of sexual arousal was contributed by nudity, 14 per cent by romantic content, two per cent by the suggestiveness of the printed word. Among females, 33 per cent was contributed by romantic appeal, seven per cent by the printed word, two per cent by nudity. Next, Morrison tested 80 advertisements—half with high sex content and half with low. Subjects shown "Low Sex" advertisements remembered an average of 16 products, those show "high sex" advertisements remembered only 11. There was no improvement in the latter group even when subjects were specifically told to remember the products advertised. Sex draws attention, but it does not get the message across. People are too busy looking at the picture to remember the product.

The other two main props besides the fetishes of the modern advertisement—day dream and dream of future—also depend upon sex for their success. The urge for change from the present boredom—the seven years itch—which finds way in exotic dreams is exploited by offering adventures in far of lands with exoting settings instead of the known places in which the people live normally. They promote the idea of liberation mostly for women from the daily chores and 'human bondage'. It uses future tense—for a world dream, new aspirations, new satisfactions. The more monotonous the present, the more strong the urge to escape from the drudgery of the present, and enter into the dream world of future, shaped by the ad-man. They seize the imagination of the consumers for the promised future in a distant land. They are, in fact, the dealers in future and the dreams in a make believe world. It has been remarked that some of these advertisements "undermine our present for the sake of an illusory future. It appeals to a way of life we aspire to, or think we aspire to but have not yet achieved. It suggests that we are inadequate as we are. It both promises and threatens, it plays upon the fear of not being desirable, nor being enviable. Yet it consoles with a promise." Publicity is addressed to those who constitute the market—to the consumer—producer from whom profits are made. Many of these day dreams are fetishes which depend upon a part, a detail being split from the whole. But fetish is also created by seizing upon just one aspect of a whole "the skin without biography".

This in fact is being done not only by displaying the boobs and bums but with the captions like—the naked truth and the uncensored and also by creating a sense of glamour which has intense appeal for women. Glamour goes deeper than looks. Women are much fascinated by this glamour, whether on posters or in shop windows or in magazines. It may be noted that it was not the nude body which started the sex in advertising but the two models of a motor car which posed a choice between a symbolic mistress and a wife. It was much later that nude models were used to publicise a new model of a car. Strangely enough most of the ads are not aimed at men but women who are obsessed with the narcissistic image. An ad man writes "We are not trying to promote a sexual response, but a narcissistic response which is present in every woman. It's not sexual. It's not even sensual".

There is much to say for and against sex and nudity in the advertisement world of today. A nude in an ad is like disrobing a woman in public/trafficking in white slaves in print/trade in female flesh/contaminating everything with sex/shocks the old/corrupts the adult/exploitation of the consumers/exploitation of women by sex crazy men/sizzling women in ads/money spinning devices/western culture's domination/poison of the young, etc. E.G. Batham says that illustrating every ad (this includes shaving blades) with a pretty damsel does not speak well of a creative man. We must avoid the "temptation".

Those who are not averse to sex in advertising say that anything is as dirty as mind makes it. If we faithfully follow the arguments against sex in advertising then we should demolish the great art of Khajuraho, Konarak and of other great masters of east and west. And why should it be offensive to see in magazines and posters or hoardings what is always lurking in our mind and what we crave for and enjoy in our daily lives.

Perhaps both the views are motivated by the morality of sex in advertising. The question is: Can a nude or semi-clad model in an advertisement help in promotion of sale of a product? The findings are that the people are more fascinated by the curvascious blow-up of a sizzling beauty in provocative posters than the product which it is supposed to sell. People are more likely to carry the image of the woman than of the product.

14

Skin Magazines—the voyeur's paradise

RECENTLY there has been a spurt in women's magazines all the world over, more so in the "girlies magazines for the girls". Traditionally there were three types of women's magazines: home and family, fashion and glamour, and confessional romances. Magazines like *McCall*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Mademoiselle*, *Vogue*, etc., had their well-tailored market. With the advent of *Cosmopolitan* and its innovative nude centrefold of the well-known actor Burt Reynolds, a new trend has been set for women's magazines on the pattern of *Playboy* and *Penthouse*. The environment prepared by the sexual revolution and the women's lib movement nourished the demand for erotic magazines for those women whom Editor-Publisher Bob Guccione describes as "lusty, real, indefatigable, down-to-earth, fetching, bright, sexy, uncompromising".

The newcomers—*Playgirl*, *Viva* and *Venus*—are vying with one another for exposing more and more of male anatomy, of course, women's too, to appeal to their kind of liberated women—beautiful, voluptuous females who enjoy sex. "If our readers want to see more," says *Playgirl* editor Marin Scott Milam, "then obviously will give them more." The formula for all these magazines is the same: a good number of glossy colour photos of nude and semi-nude men and in *Viva* a portion is devoted to nude women and intimate gestures of men and women together in exotic surroundings.

Venus editor Dot James in her column "So To Speak" has listed the magazine's goals: "We applaud woman as a sexual being... A second goal is to project an image of women as vital, intelligent, interesting, reasonable, aware, responsive and varied creatures..." *Viva* exploits men also. It has carried discussions on men's conscious raising and articles on male sexual fantasies.

Interestingly enough these magazines carry articles and photos on prostitution to feed the lust of male chauvanism. "Adventures in the White Slave Traffic" (*Venus*) and Prostitution: Honest women, Or..." (*Playgirl*) follow the similar line of writing. *Venus* article is a titilating account of author Charles Fracchia' experiences with women at massage parlours and dial-a-date services who are whores in disguise: "Jennifer's massage techniques resembled sensual foreplay more than a massage, and my penis was stiffening beneath me as a result of her ministrations to my buttocks, back and shoulder, and as her nipples glided tightly on my body." The author's analysis of new sexuality smacks of male prejudices that these women have chosen this profession as an alternative to office work." *Playgirl* featured an interview by Stephanie Caruana with several members of Coyote: A Loose Women's Organization. These women are prostitutes, housewives and professionals, working to "decriminalize prostitution". Many to the Coyote members are part-time prostitutes with husbands and families. One of the interviewees says: "As long as virginity is a prime value, women's sexuality has to be a commodity, whether you sell to a convent, or in the form of monogamy to a husband, or by the minute to willing patrons".

But these magazines protest when these are dubbed as new entrants in skin trade. *Playgirl* editor wrote: "I resent the connotation of us as a skin magazine for women." Bob Guccione said that beefcake approach is "insulting to the intelligence of women. It is like putting on a man's suit, decorating it with lace and calling it a woman's suit. *Viva* represents a return to romanticism. And it won't offend the women's lib people unless we're talking about fanatics." He had said : "I don't know anybody who understands women better than I do. I am one of the few men who genuinely loves all women, young, old and pretty."

These new magazines for "liberated" women in fact cater to those who are curious about new sexuality and want to know about sex and related subjects in an uninhibited manner. But they are the product of the porno industry. Sex sells. And these magazines sell well. There is a suspicion that women's skin magazines with the male nude figures appeal also to the gay people. These girlies try to undermine the message of the true magazines devoted to the cause of women's liberation like *Ms.*, *Off the Back and Women: A Journal of Liberation.* *Ms.* is the first women's magazine founded, published, edited and written mainly by, for and about women. *Manushi in* India follows the same trend and fights for the cause of women especially the downtrodden. Women's lib leader Gloria Steinem wants *Ms.* to help women to change their lives. Editor-Publisher Patricia Carbine says: "If we do our job in the right way, we will be a truly humanist magazine with equal appeal to men and women." This is in clear contrast to the porno magazines for women. Their stereotype men and women as sex object is a part of sexual politics and negates everything for which the women's lib movement stands and fights for.

15

After Nudity—what next ?

THE nude wave, everywhere, has taken over the media world. Films, stage plays, magazines, posters, bill boards, pin-ups, books and calendars are full of nudity and erotica. Porno shops and live shows are openly advertised. Pop-porn and blue films specialise in nude exhibitionism and sexual fantasies. Live shows have special emphasis on nude couples in single or group simulated coitus with accent on orgasm to bring "any woman to heights of ecstasy she has never known before". Men's magazines and manuals take fantastic feast of sexual intimacies and photographs of over-sized organs displayed in every conceivable form. Now the woman magazines too have found the nude cult more profitable. A male nude stretched out to display all his manliness (hair and all) appeared in 'Cosmopolitan'—the leading American women's monthly. Some enterprising women have produced what they say is the world's first all male—nude calendar for liberated females. "It is not pornographic", said Carol Fulton, a photographer who shot 8 of the 12 unclothed, but modestly posed portraits each of which adorns a different month. "My mother loved it and she wants them for all my aunts and relatives," is the comment. The ladies say they have printed 10,000 copies of "The ladies' home companion", as the new calendar is called.

Nudity is a big business. It is a part of the commercially sponsored youth culture and the permissive age. It has helped in designing such tantalising dresses which had become an integral part of the erotic paraphernalia. The exhibition of female flesh and sex-oriented fashions are part of the sexual furnishing industry in all the major cosmopolitan cities of the world.

Strip tease and burlesque theatre is flourishing in a new atmosphere of sexual liberty, where bareing a breast on stage could once land a girl in jail.

Sex magazines and books are now showing nude with pubic hair and compromising sex positions. Even the male organ (though shown limp perhaps for reasons of law) is also finding its way in these publications. *Playboy*, *Penthouse*, *Mayfair*, *Hustler*, *Men Only*, etc., have pushed nudity to the farthest thus showing female figures in all their nude glamour. Hustler has stated 'showing pink, one up on showing pubic hair. Even nude models, are used to advertise the new models of cars. Though they were under instruction, as it is said, not to move their bodies while on show and "under no circumstances must the girls show their pubic hair". There is little doubt that the more successful men's magazines sell entirely on their nude photographs with sexual and titilating textual matter. The 'naturist' magazines like 'Health and Efficiency' and 'Outdoor Liesure' that used to be bought by school boys and genuine nudists are more popular for erotic motives as though they are sex magazines. Ronald Bryden writes that the result has been a mental equation of nudity with sexuality. The only nakedness, we know, comes in a sexual content in a form which leads us to plan our own body in fantasy with idealist shapes, importance of physical perfections.

The Indian films too are becoming more and more bold to achieve this end by advertising nudity, sex, rape and other erotic motives. An advertisement of a Hindi film showed the leading lady clad in a towel who says: Soon this towel will be removed. This clearly is an invitation to the people to have sexual fantasies even if they do not see the film. This is the same nude girl of "Chetna" who stood with legs parted in the bed-room beckoning her lover for love making.

No doubt, pornography uses nudity for erotic exposure whether it is a soft-porno or hard-porno. In soft-porno there is no explicit sex act. Nudity is shown but not the genitals. In hard-porno, full frontal nudity and both male and female genitalia are included. Sex act is shown with special emphasis on perverted sexual behaviour. Of course in super hard porno nothing is left to one's imagination. Even animals and human beings are shown in sexual relationship.

In U.S.A., in Los Angeles on any weekend, one can see the flock of nude bathers without even the proverbial fig leaf. According to the American Sun-bathers' Association, about one lakh men and women attend these week-end get-togethers. They say: "Nothing can be more antiseptic than a nudist colony". A lady remarked that when she sheds her clothes she sheds all the ugly dirty world. The nudists believe that dress is not only unhealthy but immoral that creates sexual urge and thus brings in its wake sex pressure and morbid behaviour. Furthermore, it creates class distinctions.

Even in Yugoslavia, the streets were plastered with poses of naked women. The country publishes colourful magazines with photographs of naked women. Two magazines 'Cik' and 'Eve/Adam' have flourishing business.

India, too, is trying to catch up with this nude cult. At least our people try to shed much of their reservations and clothes in the countries of the west.

Miss Nude Contests and nude dances are common spectacle on the western stage. Seeing a photograph of Paula Kelly dancing absolutely nude with pubic hair and all, a writer remarked, "Nudity could be more beautiful and entertaining".

Plays like 'Oh Calcutta' and 'Hair' and the films like 'Last Tango in Paris' are classical examples of nude on stage and in films.

The first scene of Last Tango in Paris, shows: "A man (named Paul) is middle-aged leonine, ravaged. The girl (named Jeanne) is young, fox-like. Total strangers to each other, they are inspecting an unfurnished Paris apartment that is for rent. Suddenly the man scoops the girl up in his arms, carries her to the side of the room, embraces...kisses...tears off her panties...has sex with her while still dressed and standing......against the wall...... Finally, gasping and groaning, they tumble down......roll apart, still......."

And at the top of all this young people protest against war and the Bomb in nude. The bed-in nude protest of pop singer John Lenoon and his Japanese wife Yoko had become a classic protest of our age.

An advertisement of lingeries which perhaps sums up the present situation regarding nudity says: After Nudity What Next/Just lately, the shocking truth of all have been revealed/ Bare Bodies Get Boring.

16

Documents

COMMISSION ON OBSCENITY AND PORNOGRAPHY (USA)—1970

THE Report (1970) of the U.S. Presidential Commission to analyse pornography, obscenity and erotica is the largest study of its kind.

The crucial section of the Commission's report studies the 'Effects of Explicit Sexual Materials.' Their two main conclusions were:

1. Exposure to erotic stimuli appears to have little or no effect on already established attitudinal commitments regarding either sexuality or sexual morality.
2. The Commission cannot conclude that exposure to erotic material is a factor in the causation of sex crimes or sex delinquency.

The main findings of the Commission were:

1. Pornography is not a 'matter of national concern' to most people in the USA.
2. Pornography is not as big a business as people think, at least in its explicit forms (*i.e.*, if you don't include the normal run of advertising and movies as 'pornographic' on the grounds that they have some or any sexual content). The Commission found that 'the mail-order erotica business is very tenuous and stories that vast fortunes have been made overnight are largely apocryphal'; that 'there are no great fortunes for only 60 million out of a total take of 1.065 billion by the US film industry in a year (1969).
3. Women enjoy and respond to pornography/erotica as much as men.
4. Some people equate 'obscenity' with 'pornography' and apply both terms to any type of explicit sexual

materials. Other persons intend differences of various degrees in their use of these terms. In the Commission's report the terms 'obscene' or 'obscenity' are used solely to refer to the legal concept of prohibited sexual materials. The term 'pornography' is not used at all in a descriptive context because it appears to have no legal significance and because it most often denotes subjective disapproval of certain materials rather than their content or effect.

5. Citizens' Action Groups may be interpreted as an attempt to reinforce and restate systems of values and behavioural standards which are perceived to be disintegrating. Because a number of people will no longer voluntarily subscribe to these standards under the pressure of informal sanctions, an attempt is made to arouse the community to a reaffirmation of values and standards in this area and to formalise them with new external sanction systems, usually in the form of new laws or prosecutions under the existing laws.
6. There is a correlation between experience with erotic materials and general attitude to sex...persons who are more sexually tolerant are also less rejective of sexual materials. On the other hand, persons who are older, less educated, religiously active, less experienced with erotic materials or feel sexually guilty are most likely to judge a given erotic stimulus obscene.
7. Eighty per cent of boys and 70 per cent of girls have seen visual or read textual descriptions of sexual intercourse by the time they are eighteen, or that experimental and survey studies show that exposure to erotic stimulus produces sexual arousal in a substantial proportion (of subjects).
8. Other surveys found that married couples reported more lovemaking and discussion of sex after viewing erotic materials, that men are more stimulated by photos of nude women than of nude men and vice versa, and so on.
9. The Commission also went into the more general

arguments about social standards and morality in some detail. One of their surveys found that 40 per cent to 60 per cent of the American public believed that sexual materials provide information about sex, improve the sexual relations of married couples, produce boredom with sexual materials, lead people to commit rape, encourage innovation in marital sex techniques and lead people to lose respect for women.

10. The Commission concluded: The current flux in sexual values is related to a number of powerful influences among which are the ready availability of effective methods of contraception, changes of the role of women in our society, and the increased education and mobility of our citizens. The availability of explicit sexual materials is, the Commission believes, not one of the important influences on sexual morality.

ENQUIRY COMMITTEE ON FILM CENSORSHIP (INDIA)—1968[1]

CENSORSHIP all over the world is tending to become increasingly liberal, particularly in relation to erotic themes. At the same time, there is emphasis now on the protection of children and young adolescents from the harmful effects of films depicting excessively erotic scenes, violence, cruelty and crime. For their protection, in certain countries rules have been framed classifying films into different categories. In some countries, children below a certain age are not allowed to go to the public cinemas at all and in others they are allowed only if they are accompanied by their parents or guardians. To see certain films, they are not allowed even if they are accompanied by parents.

There is a growing tendency not to have detailed rules of censorship but to lay down briefly-worded general principles to promote greater flexibility in the matter of censorship, and to give wider discretion to censors in assessing films.

Classification of films may be three-fold:

(i) 'U' Fit for Universal Exhibition, including children of all ages.
(ii) 'G' Fit for Universal Exhibition, but fit for children only if they are accompanied by adults.
(iii) 'A' Fit for adult audiences only.

The studies show that films have the greatest effect on young minds. The mature mind can discount the unreality of the film, but the young mind cannot. Scenes of crime, violence and cruelty are prone to change the thinking and conduct of young children and adolescents. For example, when a young child sees love without marriage on the screen performed by popular film stars, a measure of sympathy and approval for illicit emotions is aroused in him and he does not develop an aversion to adulterous or lascivious conduct. Crime films inspire delinquency. Many adolescents have been found to have been affected by films of this sort. Investigators believe that a great deal of liberty in sex matters claimed by the young minds today is due to the effect of films.

---

[1] Chairman, Justice G.D. Khosla.—(Extracts) from the Report.

In the same way, films affect the minds of unsophisticated, uneducated and simple adults also. Even if the seeing of such films does not make delinquents of innocent young men, it does have a very violent and depraving effect upon their minds. The continual viewing of such films makes them insensitive to cruelty and violence, and they become prone to inflict violence on others. Above all, the young minds need protection from all types of highly emotional sequences, whether they be excessively erotic love scenes, scenes showing excessive or unusual cruelty or stories in which details of crimes are depicted in a way, which glamourises crime and the criminal.

There is almost universal criticism both of the film content and of the present mode of censorship. In this respect, the replies to the Questionnaires are remarkably consistent with the conclusions derived from a detailed examination of the oral evidence tendered before the Committee and the numerous memoranda received by it.

On the subject of sex and obscenity in films, the general opinion appears to be that though our attitudes have changed a great deal towards more liberality, there is a marked increase in excessive stress on sex themes in films.

Effect on Children: The replies showed that children are deeply affected by films dealing with crime, spying, violence and war, and a change in their behaviour is noticeable after they have seen such films. It was suggested by a witness that children upto the age of 13 or 14 should be allowed to see only those films which are entirely devoid of the themes of crime, sex, and violence. A critic felt that the responsibility for children in regard to films should be placed squarely upon the shoulders of the parents.

To save the young and impressionable children and potential delinquents from the baneful effect of certain films, the Censors should be strict and forthright in the matter of classification. If the producer insists on a 'U' certificate, the entire dance and song sequence which is vulgar should be deleted and not merely a few feet from it.

Principles of Censorship

Need for Censorship and Constitutional Validity: A film makes its impact by simultaneously arousing the visual and aural senses. The written word is understood by only a small fraction of the people, the spoken word reaches even fewer persons, but the film contains a complete and immediate appeal for everyone. And, if post production penal action against objectionable films is to be taken, the remedy may be too long delayed, for before the producer can be punished and the film withdrawn, it will already have done a great deal of irreparable damage. Therefore, in the case of films, censorship or pre-production control can be deemed to be a reasonable restriction on the right of freedom of expression.

Nature and Extent of Restriction: No rules framed by the Censor Board which go beyond the provisions of the Constitution can be legal. Censorship, therefore, must be within the terms of the Constitution, i.e., it must comply with the requirements of clause 2 of Article 19. Freedom of expression is a fundamental right of the Indian citizen and the film artist has the right to express his ideas and communicate them as long as in doing so he does not transgress any law of the land.

Guidelines Instead of the Code: It is important not to have a code drawn up by the Government under its rule-making authority, for such a code assumes the rigidity of a legal enactment, and does not permit the exercise of discretion. Therefore, the Censors should themselves draw up the necessary guidelines. This will result in flexibility and the Censors will have ample discretion in the matter of certification of films.

Decency and Morality: The principles laid down by the Supreme Court in regard to indecency and immorality reproduced at pages 255 and 256 of this Report must be carefully studied and applied by the Board of Censors. Films which do not fall within the mischief of these principles but may be considered in bad taste and unsuitable for young people can be easily rendered inocuous by the device of classification. At the same time, a film must be taken as a whole, evaluated as a single integrated work of art or entertainment. *If in telling the story, it is logical, relevant or necessary to depict a passionate kiss or a nude human figure, there should be no question of excluding the shot, provided the theme is handlea with delicacy and feeling, aiming at aesthetic expression and avoiding all suggestion of unnecessary prurience or lasciviousness.* This will give greater scope to the serious minded and sensitive creator of aesthetic films. The Censors should reject an entire film, which in its totality, is considered unwholesome because of many vulgar and obscene shots in it.

Incitement to an Offence

Incitement itself is punishable, whether it does or does not lead to the commission of the offence. A film containing a sequence which openly incites the audience to commit an offence should most certainly not be certified for public exhibition. Gruesome depiction of violence may be held to amount to incitement to commit an offence. The close association of erotic pleasure with the brutal infliction of pain in a film may indirectly incite an ordinary reasonable young man or woman to seek the sort of erotic experience displayed in the film. Cruelty and the infliction of pain move the viewers to perform similar acts. Therefore, any film in which violence is shown as a source of pleasure, erotic or otherwise, should be considered objectionable on the ground that it amount to an incitement to commit an offence.

Double Standard of Censorship with regard to Films of Indian and Foreign Manufacture

The overall effect, the intention of the producer, the nature of the story, the country of origin and the effect of the type of audience viewing the film are all matters which must be simultaneously considered before deciding whether a particular shot or sequence in a foreign film should be passed or deleted. Having regard to the boldness with which many foreign producers treat human problems, it will be advisable to categorise films containing too frank and intense a discussion of human relationship as films deserving the 'A' certificate instead of banning them completely.

Protection of Children: Children and impressionable young boys and girls form a special class. Children between 10 and 15 are most vulnerable to evil influences. They must be protected from evil and depraving impacts. The censorship applicable to films which the children may be prevented from seeing will be more extensive and wider in scope than the code for adults because a restriction which may well be deemed unreasonable when applied to adults may be adjudged reasonable in reference to young and immature minds. This can best be achieved by strictly classifying films as fit for universal exhibition (U), for general exhibition (G) and for exhibition to adult audience only (A).

Improving Film Content: To improve the artistic and aesthetic quality of Indian films, the following measures are suggested:

Greater freedom should be permitted in the theme content of films. Producers should be allowed to deal with social and political questions and also the subject of sex. As far as films meant for adult audiences are concerned, greater freedom will not do any harm. The baneful effects, if any, of such films upon children and adolescents can be prevented by the classification suggested in the Principles of Censorship. Persons under the age of 18 will not be allowed to see 'A' category films. Children under the age of 16 will be permitted to see 'G' category films only if they are accompanied by adults. 'U' category films will be open to all audiences.

A stimulus for the production of better films can be provided by awarding an Outstanding Merit Certificate to films which have a high aesthetic, artistic and cultural value. In case of such films, the producer will be entitled to apply for exemption of Entertainment Tax. The refund can be authorised by the Film Council.

Extract of pages 255 and 256 of the Report

The Supreme Court laid down the following principles which must be carefully studied and applied by our censors when they have to deal with a film said to be objectionable on the ground of indecency or immorality:

1. Treating with sex and nudity in art and literature cannot be regarded as evidence of obscenity without something more.
2. Comparison of one book with another to find the extent of permissible action is not necessary.
3. The delicate task of deciding what is artistic and what is obscene has to be performed by Courts and in the last resort, by the Supreme Court and so, oral evidence of men of literature or others on the question of obscenity is not relevant.
4. An overall view of the obscene matter in the setting of the whole work would of course be necessary but the obscene matter must be considered by itself and separately to find out whether it is gross and its obscenity is so decided that it is likely to deprive or corrupt those whose minds are open to influences of this sort and into whose hands the book is likely to fall.
5. The interests of contemporary society and particularly the influence of the book etc., on it must not be overlooked.
6. Where obscenity and art are mixed, art must be so preponderating as to throw the obscenity into a shadow or the obscenity so trivial and insignificant that it can have no effect and can be overlooked.
7. Treating with sex in a manner offensive to public decency or morality which are words of our Fundamental Law judged by our national standards and considered likely to pander to lascivious, prurient or sexually precocious minds must determine the result.
8. When there is propagation of ideas, opinions and informations of public interests or profits, the society may tilt the scales in favour of free speech and expression. Thus books on medical science with intimate illustrations and photographs though in a sense immodest, are not to be considered obscene, but the same illustrations and photographs collected

in a book form without the medical text would certainly be considered to be obscene.

9. Obscenity without a preponderating social purpose or profit cannot have the constitutional protection of free speech or expression. Obscenity is treating with sex in a manner appealing to the carnal side of human nature or having that tendency. Such a treating with sex is offensive to modesty and decency.
10. Knowledge is not a part of the guilty act. The offender's knowledge of the obscenity of the book is not required under the law and it is a case of strict liability. (Summary of the conclusions). □